

## Interview with John H. Stutesman

Courtesy of the Oral History Program of Columbia University and the Foundation of Iranian Studies

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JOHN H. STUTESMAN

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STUTESMAN: My name is John Hale Stutesman. I was born in Washington, D.C., in 1920, educated in a variety of schools, and graduated from Princeton in 1942, a history major. Then I went to war and served as a Captain in the Field Artillery in the war in Europe, fighting in Italy for a couple of years.

I took my Foreign Service exam in Italy at the end of the war in Europe, and when the war ended in Japan, I came home and took and passed the oral examination in the spring of '46, and was commissioned a Foreign Service officer in mid-year of 1946.

I asked to be assigned to the Far East, which I'd never seen, and was sent to be a vice consul in the U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai. In 1949, I was chased out of China by

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the communists, and returned home and asked for an assignment to the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, because I had developed an interest in Central Asia.

One of the problems with America's perception of Iran, in my opinion, is the generalization that it is essentially like the Arab nations of the Near East. In fact, historically it is on the warring frontier between the eastward pushing Arabs and the southwesterly drive of the Aryan and Turko peoples. I thought then of Iran as essentially a Central Asian country, and I still think it can be described in those terms.

I also wanted to get out of the consular work, which I'd been performing in the great port of Shanghai, and it is significant that Tehran is 1,000 miles from any port. I also married at that time, and so in mid-1949, I took a bride from San Francisco to Tehran.

The U.S. embassy was then functioning in the old German Embassy on a main city street near the British and the Russian compounds. The ambassador, John C. Wiley, was a subtle, experienced, superb diplomat, but he never came to the embassy. His entire tour in Tehran, he never entered the offices of the embassy. He remained at his residence, where he established his personal office. His secretary and his senior staff would join him there every day. I was present one time when he told a bemused security officer that his poodles would take care of any intruders.

The staff, at the time of my arrival, was very small, headed by Ambassador Wiley, who is no longer alive, and the DCM, Arthur Richards, who is alive, in Washington. An adjutant named Joe Wagner, a gentle administrator, long dead, had been brought by Wiley from their last post together in Lisbon. The economic commercial officer was John Ordway, who is still alive in Seattle. The political officer was Gerry Dooher, long dead, a charming Irish type, loved to play at intrigue, and joined with Ambassador Wiley in a variety of bewildering and generally unproductive games. The CIA chief of station was Roger Goiran, still alive in Florida, an experienced and deft professional. John Waller, who recently retired from one of CIA's most senior positions, Inspector General, was one of his assistants.

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I was the junior officer, and therefore, despite my longing for a change, I was put in charge of consular affairs.

So began my involvement in Iranian affairs in mid-1949. It would last five years, except for a brief break of a month's home leave. The first half of that time I was at the U.S. embassy in Tehran, moving from the consular to the political section in 1950. I served three ambassadors there: John Wiley, Henry Grady, and Loy Henderson. The second half of those five years was spent in Washington, where I became the Iranian desk officer.

In those five years, I was a close witness to the rise and fall of Muhammad Mossadegh, the fiery nationalist leader. I was in Iran when he came to power and drove out the British. I was in Washington when he was overthrown and the young Shah established a power base and friendship for the West which would last another 20 years.

I became a joyful admirer of the Persian people. More than most people, they are affected by their place on earth. I do not mean this in environmental terms as the jungle affects the Bantu or the desert affects the Bedouin; I mean their geographical location. They live on a bridge across which conquering hordes have moved since the beginning of martial man, yet they survive, and the present boundaries of Iran are astonishingly similar to those of Cyrus, who brought together the Medes and the Persians and set the stage for expansion west and east. The language of Iran today bears close resemblance to that of the Indo-European ancestors who rode in from the steppes of Russia.

The record of the extraordinary resistance of the Persian people to successive conquests compares to the Indo-European people who held the Anatolian plateau for 1,000 years until the Turks came. Then everything changed there—language, race, religion. But in Iran, there remains a remarkable similarity to the ancient past. The Arabs conquered Iran. In consequence, the Arab courts became glorious centers of Persian influence, reaching with the Islamic conquests into Spain, and ultimately to South America, where I

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was aware, when I was at an arid post in the Andes of Bolivia, that their Spanish colonial artifacts bore the clear impression and influence of Persian art.

Another characteristic of the Persians which has always delighted me is that a Persian will never “lie”; he believes absolutely sincerely in everything he says. The wise foreign correspondent Georgie Anne Geyer was astonished that Khomeini would tell her things that he would contradict completely in an interview with another correspondent shortly after. This is as natural as breathing to a Persian. It's like dealing with a flowing stream. I mention this because I think this is pertinent to any view of Mossadegh and his attitude toward negotiations with the West.

One other characteristic: the Persian feels the unseen hand in every moment of his personal and national life. This is not superstition, it's a palpable fact. Mossadegh rose to power on a wave of anti-British feeling, yet many—and perhaps even he—believed that he was a British tool.

In the last years of the Shah's reign and today, it is the American who is that unseen hand, and I don't think it would be hard to find a Persian today who could explain Khomeini in terms of his being a tool of American policy.

That's the sort of introduction that I had in mind, and now I am open to any questions that you have.

*Q: That raises more questions in my mind that we can discuss as we go along. You mentioned Ambassador Wiley. What kind of relationship did he develop with Iranian officials or the Shah, for that matter, as ambassador?*

STUTESMAN: I think John Wiley's attitude toward the Shah was deeply marked by the difference in their age and their experience. I won't say that Wiley scorned him, but I think Wiley looked on him as simply a young and uninformed man. On the other hand, Wiley always dealt with him properly in terms of diplomatic deference. There is a dispatch in

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the files of the Department, which is a very famous one, in which Wiley cut out from a Life magazine article pictures of the French comedian Fernandel, who bore a remarkable resemblance to Wiley. Wiley illustrated a report on an interview with the Shah with these pictures. It's a charming report to read, but it reflects the basic attitude of Wiley, which was that the Shah was not a significant person.

Wiley, on the other hand, maintained very good relations with senior advisors to the Shah, and he entertained them and developed an intimacy with them and, of course, with other members of the diplomatic corps.

*Q: Do you recall any of the names of the Iranian officials?*

STUTESMAN: The names elude me now. There was a doctor. No, I can't.

*Q: I have some questions about American policy towards Iran at this stage, around 1949, 1950, the time you arrived in the country. How would you characterize, as you understood it, the Truman Administration's overall approach to Iran at this stage?*

STUTESMAN: Without any doubt, the attitude of the Americans at that time was that Persia was a part of the British responsibility in the world.

*Q: So they assumed that the British would more or less stand guard over various Western interests—oil, resources, and so forth?*

STUTESMAN: Yes. They not only felt that the British would protect Western interests, but, in my opinion, they felt that it was not part of our responsibility to buck the British in Iran.

*Q: Some of the documents I've seen suggest in some way that policy-makers at the time, the State Department especially, saw Iran as sort of a buffer between the Soviet Union and oil fields on the Arabian Peninsula. Was that a commonly held view?*

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STUTESMAN: Yes, in strategic terms. It seems to me that the phrase always was, going back to Peter the Great, who, I think, wrote a letter or wrote a memorandum or did something in which he made it clear that he was anxious to reach the warm waters on the southern shore of Iran. I think that was more cliché than a very serious bit of policy thinking, but essentially, the Americans viewed Iran as a strategic factor in the world, in my opinion, rather than a source of oil.

*Q: When you settled in Iran in 1949, where did you live? What headquarters did you have?*

STUTESMAN: The first house we had was a two-room mud structure right across from the American embassy compound. We moved into it because the man I had replaced expected to return, and we simply were filling his house for that period.

Then we moved to a larger house near the Russian embassy downtown, where, on a memorable moment, if I can just pause, my son was one month old, and my mother-in-law was there, and my wife was there suffering from violent malaria, which she'd gotten in a blood transfusion. We celebrated my son's first-month birthday, built up a large fire, and the house burned down.

We then moved into the home of a fellow Foreign Service officer, Walter Howe, and stayed with his family for two months. To my great delight, I have just recently married his widow, Margaret Howe.

Then we rented a place up in Golhak, up high on the flank of the mountain, a lovely garden and very comfortable house. That's where we remained the rest of our tour.

*Q: What was Tehran like in those days?*

STUTESMAN: When I arrived in Tehran in mid-1949, camels were still moving through the streets, the entire city. While I was there, the city closed off access to camels and kept them in the lower section. The taxis were about equally motorized or horse-drawn

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droshkis. The water system was the famous jube system, which remained in effect while I was there. The great northern flank of the city rising up the mountain was essentially open ground, except for summer places. The southern part of the city was swarming slum.

*Q: Did you do much traveling around the country during your three years in Iran?*

STUTESMAN: Yes, I did. I went to Meshed, went up to the Caspian, went to Tabriz, and then I flew to Hormuz and drove a truck back from Hormuz all across the desert, up through Yazd and to Tehran and of course, I frequently visited Shiraz and Isfahan.

*Q: What were your impressions of the conditions in the countryside outside of Tehran during that period?*

STUTESMAN: I'd been familiar with western China and the Central Asian look of that part of the world. So psychologically, I was quite prepared for the misery and unclean conditions. The Persian villager struck me as somehow more passionate—it's the only word I can think of, intelligence isn't quite the word—than the Western Chinese. The trucks and buses moved through the communities, so they were not as cut off from the world as the Chinese of Central Asia, in my opinion. Radios were, of course, in constant use all through the villages. It was a country that had not moved much from medieval times.

*Q: During this period, what was the extent of the non-official U.S. community in Tehran, maybe Iran generally? Were there many American businessmen there, educators, clergy?*

STUTESMAN: The non-official American community was dominated, in my recollection, by the Presbyterians, who were educators and medical people and had a couple of missionaries who were extremely courageous men, who would literally go into these small villages and preach Christ to these Muslims. Astonishingly, while I was there, none were attacked or killed. The teachers were much revered, much appreciated. There were very few businessmen. There were a few American women who had married Persians in the United States and then gone with their husbands, back to Iran. But it was not a very large

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community. When we gave Fourth of July parties, there would be a few Americans who would come and who, I believe, were deserters from World War II. There was a black man I remember, and we were all very careful never to pursue them, and to welcome them, indeed. But it was not a large community. The British was the dominant Western community.

*Q: You said that during this period, 1949 and early 1950, you were consular officer at the embassy?*

STUTESMAN: My first job there was to run the consular section. There was a vice consul and myself and an American secretary, and we were very active—visitors' visas for Iranians, and then a large number of Russian Dukhabour types, strict Baptists and so on, who had fled Russia, and some Poles left over from the Polish encampments there during the war, who were seeking emigration visas.

*Q: You worked in the embassy proper, or was there a separate section for the consular?*

STUTESMAN: We had one of the large rooms, the old ball room, in the German embassy, and it seems to me access was straight off the street, past a receptionist. The political and economic sections were on the second floor, and the administrative section was also on the ground floor, as I remember.

*Q: Was there much social interaction between the various officers of the consular section, on the one hand, and the political section or the economic section?*

STUTESMAN: We're talking about only five or six officers, and we all were close friends. We were all professional Foreign Service officers. Oh, yes, there was a very close relationship.

*Q: Did you become a political officer in 1950?*

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STUTESMAN: 1950. I was about a year in the consular section and moved to the political section. When John Wiley left, Henry Grady came in. He was a much more organized man in bureaucratic terms, and the embassy took a more formal shape as sections developed. Before, as I say, Wiley and Dooher ran sort of a political section, but there wasn't any real sense of a section. Under Grady it took the shape, and I was the junior officer in that section. Roy Melbourne was my chief.

*Q: During the period that you were in Iran, did you see the Shah at close range at any stage?*

STUTESMAN: The Shah and I were about the same age. He and I were in school at Switzerland at the same time, not at the same school, but we had that common experience. My French is very good. And I was married to a very beautiful woman, so we were frequently invited to very informal parties where we played Blind Man's Bluff and musical chairs, and where the Shah and his sisters and Miss Cote d'Azur and others all joined in. So my personal relationship with the Shah was a very friendly one. As I say, we were of the same age, and we both had an appreciation of beautiful women.

*Q: What impression did you pick up of him? How would you characterize the Shah as you saw him?*

STUTESMAN: While I was in Tehran, I wrote a dispatch on the Shah, which was classified. I have no idea if it's been declassified or published or anything, but it was a long dispatch describing in great detail aspects of the Shah's character and attitudes and his family. It was a dispatch which was much read. I also wrote a long dispatch on Mossadegh "The Rise of an Iranian Nationalist," which also has been much quoted. I recommend both of those to anyone interested in that period.

My own feeling about the Shah was then, and still is, although I was not involved with Iranian affairs in his latter years there, that he was a gentle person, a person of very good

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intentions, a person much influenced by the Christian European experience that he had as a boy. Also he was much influenced by his dominant father, both for good and for ill.

His attitude toward the West was, I think, very sincerely favorable. After all, his father had set the pattern. His father was a great admirer of Ataturk, and the father had set the pattern of trying to work Iran toward modernization. He didn't get as far as Ataturk did, but he was working in that direction. The Shah, I think, always felt that he was carrying forward some of his father's banners. He was a decent man. His interest in women sometimes got in the way. His twin sister certainly had an undue influence on him sometimes.

*Q: Ashraf.*

STUTESMAN: Yes, Ashraf. But his own personal instincts were decent and conformed very closely to general attitudes that a young man born and raised in the West had. This is my general appreciation of his attitudes. As I say, my dispatch, which is a rather lengthy one, goes into a great deal more detail, but comes out with that conclusion.

*Q: You suggested earlier that Ambassador Wiley did not have a serious attitude towards the Shah, or did not take him very seriously. Did Grady have a different attitude towards the Shah?*

STUTESMAN: Grady reluctantly was forced to concentrate on Mossadegh, and his attitude toward the Shah, I believe, was that the Shah was a secondary factor, Mossadegh was the person to deal with and to influence if he could. I don't think he scorned the Shah, but I just think he had to concentrate on what he thought was the main objective.

*Q: After 1953, when the Shah's position was restored and Mossadegh was overthrown, there was a developing view in the U.S. State Department and elsewhere, that the Shah was like a linchpin of stability in Iran, that his position had to be supported as such to keep Iran politically and socially stable. To what extent was that view held in embassy or elsewhere in this period during the very early 1950s in Iran?*

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STUTESMAN: When I was in the political section in the embassy in Tehran and wrote that dispatch on the Shah, which, of course, had to be cleared up through my masters, it came down with a very solid conclusion that the Shah was worth supporting. I certainly didn't use terms like "linchpin," but that he was the best of known hopes for the future.

When I was on the desk in Washington, the decision was made that Mossadegh should be overthrown and the Shah should be brought to a firmer status of power. I think rather like what happened in Vietnam, once you have a hand in overthrowing somebody the way Kennedy killed Diem, then you become much more committed to the person who comes in. I don't remember, while I was in Washington, policies being built upon the feeling that the Shah was a linchpin. I think, more, it was a sense that, well, he was the best there is, and he was a legitimate ruler and that he was a popular ruler, which I think he was when I was dealing in those things.

*Q: That's interesting. When you became political officer in 1950, what were your responsibilities? Did you have a specific assignment?*

STUTESMAN: When I went into the political section, at that time in the embassy none of the officers spoke Farsi, nor did I. Gerry Dooher had spoken sufficient Farsi to get along, but certainly was no linguist, and he was gone by that time. Perhaps in the CIA units there were some serious Farsi speakers; that's possible. But they were not being used publicly for the ambassador.

About the time I came to the political section, Mossadegh was becoming increasingly a figure. Grady could not speak Farsi, and Mossadegh did not speak English, but Mossadegh refused to have an Iranian in the room. The embassy had traditionally used a very fine, very honest and reliable man named Saleh, who spoke excellent English and was an Iranian, was the senior Iranian in our embassy. Mossadegh refused to allow him to participate in any of these intimate conversations, because he distrusted any Iranian. Therefore, they turned to me. I spoke French. Mossadegh had been educated in

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Neuchatel back in the late 1800s, and his French was not bad, although he used college expressions which would be sort of like "23 skidoo" and "cat's pajamas," which would pass right by me. But basically, for a period of time, Grady and Mossadegh had personal conversations with me acting as interpreter in French. It was not the best way to deal with very high policies, but it was the way we did it.

*Q: So that was one of your responsibilities. Of course, you monitored the internal political scene, as well.*

STUTESMAN: That's right.

*Q: Did you develop contacts routinely with local political figures in the country, in Tehran?*

STUTESMAN: Of course, some. But a broad range of contacts in the Iranian political community. I was still a fairly young man, and the Iranians place a great stress on age, and I did not speak Farsi. I think mainly I was engaged in, as I say, this concentration, this constant concentration on Mossadegh, and writing up the memoranda, the telegrams, reporting these conversations, preparing for them. And I did, as I say, some traveling around the country and did some reporting there. I can't remember anything else.

*Q: How would you characterize the political climate in Iran during the first year or two that you were in the country?*

STUTESMAN: The rise of Mossadegh was the dominant feature. I knew Razmara a little bit, and my wife was in the bazaar the day that he was killed. When she came home that day, she told me that she had been in this great, teeming bazaar with a friend, and all of a sudden everything became very quiet, and that they became alarmed, these two women, and they left and came home. Razmara was killed shortly after that. Mary always felt that the bazaar was well aware that Razmara was going to be assassinated, and indeed, I've had Persians say to me about that time, that Razmara himself had a sense of martyrdom and that he thought he was going to be killed that day. This is all Persian. Then

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as history shows, there were a series of efforts by the Shah to avoid having Mossadegh come to power. As I remember, Ala became prime minister for a while. I can't remember the details, but in any case, Mossadegh came to power in this great surge of nationalism, anti-British nationalism. That's what dominated the period that I was in Iran.

*Q: While you were consular officer in October of '49, the middle class politicians organized the National Front, I guess initially to protest the lack of free elections. That's what I've read recently. Then they went on to the oil issue as they progressed politically. What was the embassy's attitude towards the National Front in the early 1950s, late 1940s?*

STUTESMAN: I really don't know. You've got me on that one. I think I was punching visas, basically.

*Q: Again, you may not have been close to this question, but you mentioned General Razmara. I've read recently that embassy officials, especially Gerald Dooher, believed that the Shah needed to be backed up by a strong military figure like a general. Were Dooher's views very influential?*

STUTESMAN: Dooher's views were very influential on John Wiley. The two of them, in my opinion, were like boys and games. For instance, they invented a fictitious major, Major somebody or other, who was an American agent riding with the tribes in the mountains, and they leaked this news. It even got in American newspapers. These were joyous people. Personally, I think Wiley was taken in by Dooher, who I don't think was a very serious person. But Dooher had influence on Wiley, and Wiley, therefore, had influence on Iran. But I really think that the Americans at that time were not being taken too seriously by the ruling class of Iran. I think Mossadegh took the Americans more seriously than his predecessors.

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*Q: There's a new book on Iran by James Bill. Dooher played an important role in convincing Wiley to urge the Shah to appoint Razmara as prime minister in 1950. Do you know much about Dooher's role in this episode?*

STUTESMAN: I would say that's right. I think Wiley and Dooher thought it was a good thing for Razmara to come to power, but I don't have any more details.

*Q: Of course, one of Razmara's biggest opponents was Mossadegh, apparently. You said you were translator between the conversations with Ambassador Grady and Mossadegh. What were your impressions of Mossadegh?*

STUTESMAN: I was very fond of him, and he was fond of me. It was almost like a grandfather-grandson relationship. I don't think he ever felt that he could influence American policy or even Grady through me. Nonetheless, I felt always that we had a personal relationship and that he was always pleased to see me. We'd have a little bit of genial chat when we worked together. One time he accepted an invitation to lunch at the residence. This was a great concession on his part, and it was Grady's effort to have him talk directly with the British ambassador. I remember Mossadegh said he would come only if I were present and would handle the translation, which really shook the British ambassador, I was expected to translate Mossadegh's French, which, of course, the British ambassador understood perfectly well. (Laughs) And the British ambassador would reply in French, but Mossadegh would wait for me to speak. It was part of his constant effort to distress the English.

*Q: Any more comments you want to make about Mossadegh as a person?*

STUTESMAN: For one thing, he was an older man. I mean, my God, I don't think anybody ever knew exactly how old he was, but he was a very elderly man, and he was a very, very successful speaker and whipper-up of emotion. I don't think he had the slightest intention of coming to terms with the English, and I think he had a great abiding belief that America

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would eagerly replace the British and, therefore, replace the British on his terms. I think he was truly stunned that the Americans and the British hung together.

In addition, I think that Mossadegh was a man who really did not have a constructive program. He had a program of driving out the British, but I don't think he had a very clear idea of what would come next.

*Q: How much contact did embassy political officers have with the National Front politicians besides Mossadegh? The later foreign minister was Hussein Fatemi. Did you ever meet him? Did other people deal with him?*

STUTESMAN: Fatemi was a rather slick man with very good family connections out of the Qajar aristocracy, which, of course, had an abiding hatred for the Shah. Mullah Quashani was a different quality. I think Gerry Dooher played games with Quashani a certain amount. I don't remember ever meeting Quashani. My guess is that CIA had some better knowledge of Quashani and his entourage than I did. I don't remember the names of the others, but Saleh's brother was very close to Mossadegh. Saleh was the senior foreign national in our embassy and had two brothers, a doctor and a nationalist.

*Q: You suggested that the CIA might have had contact with Quashani. Did the embassy have any contact with other clergymen?*

STUTESMAN: As I remember, we had nothing but a sense that the Mullahs represented the past, and that the whole trend of events would move away from them. That was our basic attitude toward the tribes, despite the fact that there was a great deal of American interest in them, Justice Douglas came out and rode the mountains with the tribes, and Gerry Dooher was interested in the tribes, nonetheless, I remember John Wiley once saying that centrifugal forces such as the tribes were doomed, that everything was going to move toward the center, and Wiley, was wise in a very sophisticated sense. At the same time, he loved playing patsy with these tribal leaders whose father had been killed by the

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Shah's father, and who had an abiding hatred, of the Shah.(END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE; BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE)

STUTESMAN: John Wiley once made this comment, which I've often remembered, he said, "Americans think that foreigners are Americans who wear funny hats." Of course, therein lies our continuing tragedy in foreign affairs, where so many Americans, including our highest policy makers, time after time really think that they can deal with some alien on terms which make sense to them as Americans. Of course, the alien looks at them through entirely different eyes. I remember going into the villages in Iran, and I had frequently the sensation that people there would feel that if they stretched out their hands they would pass through my body, that I was as ethereal as though I had fallen from the sky. The tribes had their own interests, which were not entirely consistent with ours.

*Q: The nationalization of Anglo-Iranian oil company became a central goal of the National Front by 1950-51. How closely did you follow petroleum politics in Iran in the political section?*

STUTESMAN: Really very little. Indeed, this just may be my memory, but I don't think that Mossadegh and the majority of the Persian people who supported him were that concerned about the oil. What they were concerned about was throwing off the British yoke. The oil apparatus was the first thing to strike at, was the clear thing to strike at. Clearly there had to be an economic element to this, but again, time after time, it seems to me that the Americans—for instance, the fatuous Mr. [Averell] Harriman, whose ridiculous mission worked on the principle, as I remember, that the Iranians had to have an understanding of the oil and had to have a recognition that they couldn't just sell oil on the corner—was dealing with people who just didn't think in those terms.

Mossadegh, I believe, expected to be rescued by the Americans. I don't think he expected to be left alone. He thought that he could drive out the British, that the Americans, like any

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respectable competitor, would welcome that, would happily move in and sell his oil. We didn't do it, and he fell.

*Q: You suggested that the oil company was a symbol of British power and for the nationalists, it was a means towards an end, driving out British political influence and social influence. Did you get a sense of how the oil company operated, the AIOC, operated in Iran during this period?*

STUTESMAN: Yes. I knew the Tehran hierarchy of the AIOC, and, of course, I knew the British embassy people. Some very dear friends that I still have, Nicholas Lawford was the DCM in the British embassy, he now lives in Long Island; John Briance was one of the senior intelligence officers, he now is living in London. These are people I knew well socially, and also we talked, obviously, about current affairs. The AIOC was absolutely hand-in-glove with the embassy people. In fact, I think it would be fair to say that the AIOC had a much more dominant influence on British policy in Iran than the diplomats in the embassy.

The AIOC used money, used old connections, they used them brutally. I don't mean physical brutality, but just without much deftness. And the British embassy pretty much followed in their wake. This began to change as it became clear that the AIOC was simply incapable of handling the political difficulties. But for instance, there was the senior man, they called them Oriental Counselors, named Lance Pyman. He spoke absolutely fabulous Farsi, he had been involved with that country for many, many years, and he, as I remember, did not have any particular sense—he certainly had no prescience on the possibility and the probability that the Persians would break the concession and drive the British out. Nicholas Lawford had a much more clear view and, indeed, resigned while he was there and left the British foreign service, partially out of frustration with policy.

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*Q: You mentioned that Grady became ambassador and took over Wiley's position. I think this was around July 1950, according to my notes here. How sympathetic was Grady to Mossadegh and Mossadegh's purposes?*

STUTESMAN: First of all, Grady came to Iran from India, where he had been a very important ambassador in a very important country. Before that, he'd made his reputation in foreign affairs in Greece, and, of course, before that, he'd been a very successful, prominent businessman in the San Francisco area. I don't think he was thrilled about being appointed to Iran. I think he felt that he had taken a step down. I have no idea what his preferences would have been, but I clearly got the impression when he first arrived that he felt that he had moved from the center court to a smaller court. However, he was a very decent man, a very hard working, honest man, and he identified the problems as he saw it, and went to work on them. He was, however, more at ease in economic policies, the use of aid, the development of economic relationships, than he was in the Byzantine intrigues or the diplomatic side of things.

Again, looking back on Wiley and Doohar, those two men loved the intrigue. They moved through it like fish in water. Whether they had more impact, I don't know. I think there is always a danger of an American becoming too adept at the local game, rather than simply representing a kind of an American attitude. But there was no question that Grady was well wired into the authorities in Washington, that he was a distinctly honest American representative, and I think he was a good ambassador. I don't think any U.S. ambassador could have stopped the rise of Mossadegh or prevented the British being driven out, all things considered. But it was a great change from Wiley. When Loy Henderson came, he changed the involvement of the American ambassador into a much more subtle and diplomatic kind of a relationship than Grady played.

*Q: During this period, Grady's first half-year late in 1950, the British and the Iranians were trying to negotiate a settlement over the oil prices, oil revenue going to Iran. AIOC's share of the take was being discussed. The British were taking an obdurate position in the talks*

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*with Mossadegh and the Iranian Government. Did Grady make any efforts to convince the British to take a more flexible approach to the Iranians?*

STUTESMAN: Grady would just groan when he would be writing his reports and talking with us. He would groan at the obduracy of the British, the blankness of their minds when it came to dealing with Iranians. I would say he was probably much more angered and frustrated by the English than he was by sweet old Mossadegh. (Laughs) Although Mossadegh was a far more dangerous foe.

*Q: You mentioned General Razmara's assassination at a mosque in the bazaar. This happened a few days after he spoke out against nationalization, which was becoming a rising demand of the National Front. Shortly thereafter, the majlis passed a bill to nationalize AIOC. Within a few months, Mossadegh became prime minister, May of '51, something along that line. I've read that policy makers in Washington worried around this time that successful nationalization would have sort of a demonstration effect, that if I encourage or inspire other governments with oil resources to nationalize foreign holdings, for example, Saudi Arabia or other Middle Eastern countries, or perhaps Venezuela in Latin America. Was there much concern at the embassy about this issue?*

STUTESMAN: I have no reason to doubt you're right about what was going on back in the United States. As to the embassy, I have no doubt that there was that general concern, but the embassy, as I remember it, and like most embassies, was really concentrating on the local scene.

However, the house that I then lived in up in Golhak was part of a garden in which there was another house, and in that other house lived a man named Max Thornburg. Max Thornburg was a great buccaneer in the oil world, who had been very successful working with the Sheikh of Bahrain, who, indeed, had given him an island. In any case, Thornburg was up in Iran, living there during this time. Now, I have absolutely no evidence or proof of this, but I believe that Thornburg had lines of communication with the National Front.

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Thornburg once told me one evening, just sitting around, having a drink, he told me that if you drew a graph—I remember this so clearly because I thought it was so perfect—if anyone draws a graph showing the life of a foreign concession—he meant oil concession—in any foreign country, the graph rises slowly in terms of profits. The graph rises slowly as the investing foreign firm develops and then begins to make money and it rises up. Then there is always, inevitably, an abrupt fall as the concession is closed down. He considered that to be a force of nature, and I do, too. I think he was proven right. I don't really think it's just some kook who decides to throw the foreigners out. It's as inevitable as the sun rising. So the British, in my opinion, were struggling against a force of nature, as well as Mossadegh-led Iranians. And I doubt very much if officers of the American embassy thought that the British could remain in control for the next hundred years or even 20 years or even two years.

*Q: How would you describe the British response to nationalization? What did you think about the way they conducted themselves after the majlis passing a law nationalizing the AIOC?*

STUTESMAN: I don't think they were very smart. I don't really have a great remembrance of details, but they began to send in some very, very powerful intelligence officers—Woodhouse, Briance, men of great experience and real ability. I have read that they mounted a coup which didn't come off. I'm not really sure about that, but I do know they had absolute ace personnel in there working on the subversive side, the clandestine side.

They didn't change the quality of their embassy people much, but it sure got better than it had been before, and clearly, the British Government was taking charge of things, and it was no longer just being run by the company. But if you ask me details of what they did and so on, it's too far away from me now.

*Q: These details might have escaped you, but I read that even before Mossadegh became prime minister, the British had their alternative candidate for prime minister, Sayyid Zia*

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*Tabata'i. They wanted to find ways to overthrow Mossadegh and install Sayyid Zia as replacement. Did you know anything about this planning?*

STUTESMAN: I certainly didn't know about any of their planning, and I don't remember Tabata'i as anything more than just a face at a social function.

*Q: While the British were developing their coup plans, some of which you mentioned yourself, the Truman Administration was trying to find ways to settle the dispute by finding a basis for compromise between Mossadegh and the British Government and the AIOC. Did the embassy staff play any kind of a role in the efforts to settle the dispute?*

STUTESMAN: Yes, of course. I think the air was filled with Grady's telegrams and certainly his constant efforts to negotiate. We'd get an instruction to take something up with Mossadegh, and we'd make an appointment (Laughs) Grady and I would go see the old man lying in his bed, in his pajamas, and then we'd come back and send off a telegram. I don't think Grady ever despaired, but on the other hand, realistically, there was very little likelihood that Mossadegh would come to an accommodation with the British on any terms that the British could accept. That's about it.

Then, of course, when the Harriman mission came out, typically Mr. Harriman had nothing to do with the embassy and thought in three days or ten days, whatever it was, he could solve these issues that these "small people" had not been able to deal with. And he and Walter Levy, who was a remarkable man—I hope you get his views—and, of course, Vernon Walters was the interpreter. Vernon Walters, with his extraordinary ability, he learned enough Farsi in a few days—I mean, two or three days—to be able to translate to some degree in Farsi before he left. He's a linguist of extraordinary genius. He remembers those days. He and I have talked about it.

But the mission was doomed. It was all a part of a policy, I believe, directed from Washington, which, in my opinion, did not take true account of Mossadegh's intentions.

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*Q: So Harriman's party totally avoided the embassy, basically?*

STUTESMAN: They couldn't do that, but certainly they treated us—I mean, Harriman sort of blew in, established himself, and it's not uncharacteristic of other special envoys. The American embassy in Iran has suffered special envoys long past Harriman's time. I happen to have a particular aversion to Mr. Harriman, who I think is one of the great disasters in American foreign policy, with the Geneva Accords being his greatest contribution to our tragedy.

*Q: Apparently when Harriman met with the Shah, from what I've read, he discussed with him the possibility of replacing Mossadegh as prime minister. Do you know if he would have cleared that with the ambassador before bringing it up with the Shah?*

STUTESMAN: I have no idea. It would be perfectly in tune with his character if he didn't mention it to the ambassador. I don't think Harriman would do that sort of thing without having at least some clearance in Washington. That's all I know.

*Q: Was there much discussion at the embassy during this period, 1951-52, of the idea of replacing Mossadegh?*

STUTESMAN: You know, that's a good question. I hadn't thought of that. Now that I do think about it, my answer is no. But I left Iran well before Mossadegh fell. I was desk officer. I came back to be desk officer when Acheson was still Secretary of State. Truman was still in power. So I was desk officer when the decisions were made in Washington to dump Mossadegh. But I don't personally remember anything like that being discussed when I was in the embassy. Remember I was a fairly junior officer, and that kind of discussion, by its nature, would be held in the highest circles.

*Q: In an interview that Grady gave shortly after he left Tehran, he argued that the main obstacle to a settlement with Mossadegh was the nationalists' fear of future British political manipulation in Iran. For example, one of the sticking points in the negotiations was*

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*whether British technicians should help run a nationalized oil company or not. I think Mossadegh's supporters objected because they feared any future British role in the country at the technical level or the managerial level. How accurate do you think Grady's appraisal was of this problem?*

STUTESMAN: Again, I'm speaking in very general terms and, you might say, unprovable terms. My own personal feeling is now, and was then, that Mossadegh had absolutely no intention of settling with the British on any terms that the British could accept, despite his several offers of such settlements. I don't think that Mossadegh ever wanted to do anything except give the British a bloody nose and, along with it, went his abiding assumption that the Americans would take care of him.

*Q: Yes. While the U.S. engaged itself in a discussion over a compromise of some sort, the administration back in Washington supported international boycott of Iranian oil. The idea was to prevent Iranians from enjoying the fruits of nationalization without compensation. Compensation had not been arranged at that stage of the game. Do you know if Ambassador Grady supported this program of a boycott against oil exports from Iran?*

STUTESMAN: I don't. I have a feeling that he simply received information on that sort of thing. He may have commented. But I do remember when I was desk officer, I was at a meeting in Secretary Acheson's office. I was by far the most junior person there, and sort of sat off to one side, but I do remember they were talking at that moment about two tankers that were en route from, it seems to me, South America, en route to load Persian oil delivered by the Persian-run company. And there was a great deal of alarm and concern. I remember sitting there in a rather bemused condition, thinking, "Two tankers? Who the hell cares?" But there is no doubt in my mind that the senior policy makers in Washington were very, very alert to preventing the sale of Iranian oil to private entrepreneurs.

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There was a man named Jones of City Service, the American oil company. Alton Jones?

*Q: Alton Jones. He was a friend of Eisenhower's.*

STUTESMAN: Alton Jones was a name that kept coming up. He was clearly prepared to buy Mossadegh's oil. I think Thornburg and his associates, whoever they may have been, would have been prepared to move some of that oil. Again, I come back to my feeling that Mossadegh was encouraged by channels, by connections that I know nothing of, to believe that the Americans would take care of him. You could never persuade me that there were not people who would buy Iranian oil; there obviously were. Mossadegh, in other words, may have been working on a perfectly reasonable assumption, except for his misunderstanding of the American-British relationship.

*Q: That's very interesting. Do you recall if any U.S. oil company representatives passed through Tehran during this period? You mentioned Thornburg.*

STUTESMAN: Thornburg was living there, and he was not, as far as I know, representing an American company. He was a buccaneer.

*Q: Was he advisor to an American consulting firm working with the Iranians?*

STUTESMAN: Perhaps so.

*Q: But besides Thornburg, were there any other people that passed through Iran that you know of?*

STUTESMAN: I know Jones came through, but I couldn't tell you when. And I couldn't tell you whether I was in Washington or in Iran at that time. I have no doubt that others came through, but I don't know.

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*Q: Did you get a sense, when you were in Tehran or back at the country desk in Washington, whether U.S. oil firms had much interest in taking part in the long-run development of Iranian oil resources?*

STUTESMAN: I've thought about that a lot since those days, partially because of historians like you. It's an amazing coincidence that the Americans were able to move in profitably, but claim that they had nothing to do with Mossadegh coming to power. However, my personal opinion, based on what knowledge I have, is that the American major oil companies did not in any way suggest to Mossadegh that they would pick up whatever Mossadegh could drive the British off of. So I stand on my belief that the American oil companies did not mount any kind of conspiracy to get the British out of Iran. I do think that Mossadegh expected them to take care of him.

*Q: He felt that they would encourage them to take over from the British?*

STUTESMAN: Mossadegh worked in the belief that the Americans would not allow Russia to control Iran. The Americans were the new power and owed nothing to the British, Mossadegh felt that if he kicked out the British and threatened the Americans with Russian hegemony, that we'd rush in. He wasn't that far wrong; we did in the end. But I don't think that there was any kind of American oil company conspiracy. It was just a remarkable stroke of luck for them.

*Q: Yes. In September '51, Loy Henderson replaced Henry Grady as ambassador. You talked a little about Henderson earlier, but how would you characterize Henderson?*

STUTESMAN: First of all, I have to make clear that my personal involvement with Loy Henderson extended over a number of years. I served with him in Tehran on his staff, and I was desk officer while he was ambassador, and then a few years after that, I was stationed in Paris at that time, he called me back to be one of his special assistants in

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Washington, and I served him for three and a half years. So I'm not only a great admirer, I also am very fond of him.

Having said that, I go back to when he arrived in Tehran, he was a complete, really a dramatic change from Mr. Grady, without in any way trying to say one was better than the other. The fact is, without any question, that Mr. Henderson was a more certain person in dealing with the quagmire and walking across the bog of Iranian politics. Mr. Grady had laid the groundwork. Grady had done a great deal of hard honest work, trying to negotiate with Mossadegh.

By the time Henderson came, it had been clear that almost all avenues had been exhausted. So Henderson came in, in my view, with an instruction to do what he could, but mainly to set up lines of communication to Mossadegh and to the Shah, upon which we could build something new. Of course, that's what he did. I don't think he had instructions when he arrived, to develop an overthrow of Mossadegh; I really don't think that. Your records perhaps could show that I'm wrong, but I don't think that's what he came instructed to do. I think he came instructed to try to restore some steadiness to a situation which was a very difficult situation.

*Q: That corresponds to what I've read, that there was no aim at that point. How effective was he in working with Iranian officials, with Mossadegh or the Shah, among others?*

STUTESMAN: Loy Henderson was one of the great classic diplomats of all time. He was a man of astonishing honesty, sincerity, gentleness, and a wonderful mind. He was just an extraordinary man. He treated the Shah with absolute sincerity and respect. He never gave the Shah any sense of looking down on him, nor treating him as a less than emperor of emperors.

In his dealings with Mossadegh, one of the first things he did was to drop me as the interpreter and persuade Mossadegh to have Saleh accompany him, so that the

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negotiations could be in Persian. We still did not have a Farsi speaker on the regular embassy staff, although CIA had several.

*Q: How did he manage the embassy compared to Grady or Wiley?*

STUTESMAN: I don't remember exactly when we moved from the old German embassy. In any case, a building was constructed in the embassy compound, which was given the name of Henderson Hall. It was a very unoriginal architectural creation, but Henderson worked in that office and his staff was in that building. He was a fine leader. He had very good relations with the CIA chief, Roger Goiran, usually. I'll tell you one story to illustrate that. In order to soothe Mr. Henderson's deep suspicions of the CIA, which any sensible ambassador would hold, the people in Washington said to him, "Loy, any time you want, you can call for the 'chron' file of our telegrams." This is a tremendous concession to a State Department officer. He accepted that as a very fine gesture of respect and confidence. One day months later, he didn't have much to do, and so he called for the file.

*Q: What was the file called?*

STUTESMAN: The chronological file, the "chron" file of telegrams of, say, the past couple of months. So the secretary in the CIA office, which was in the same building, knowing the standing instructions, simply trotted it down. Mr. Henderson began to leaf through it, and about the fifth or sixth telegram was one saying, "Don't show to Loy." (Laughs)

Anyhow, he had excellent relationships with all the people on this staff. He had inherited a Point IV program run by a remarkable man named Bill Warne, who came out of California. He may still be alive, I don't know, and who, I think, had been brought in by Grady. Grady had been very active in developing aid programs. Bill Warne and the ambassador got on. And then I know this happened. Warne wanted to do something—I don't remember what it was, some program—and Mr. Henderson wouldn't say no, but he did point out several potential pitfalls, some problems and let Warne make his own decision. Warne went ahead and did it, and it turned out to be a disaster—a small disaster, but a disaster. Of course,

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ever after that when Mr. Henderson made a suggestion or a comment, Warne paid a great deal more attention. That's the way that Mr. Henderson ran things. He was an autocrat, a very definite person, but he would always give you a long lead and let you work on your own. A wonderful man.

*Q: At this stage, the embassy staff was expanding considerably.*

STUTESMAN: Oh, God yes. By then, when I was desk officer, I couldn't even guess how many Americans were there. We had military missions and aid missions. And the staff was just blossoming. I would say the political section had at least four people in it, and pretty soon they began to have Farsi speakers.

*Q: What accounted for the expansion of just the embassy staff, leaving aside the Armish-MAAG and so forth?*

STUTESMAN: The embassy staff expanded in direct correspondence to the interest of Washington in Iran. In 1949, as I say, Washington really felt, "Let the British run it. We've got much bigger things to do. We have Europe and the Far East and so on."

*Q: You were a junior officer at this stage, but did you get a sense of what Henderson thought about Mossadegh in the nationalization issue generally?*

STUTESMAN: Of course, by this time I was looked upon as somebody who had a real working knowledge of Mossadegh.

*Q: That's right.*

STUTESMAN: So I have a distinct memory of sitting in the office when Mr. Henderson would make his report. He'd come back from working with Mossadegh, and he'd make his report both to us and to Washington. He did it frequently in the form of dictating a report, and as he dictated, we could ask questions or make comments. My recollection is that Henderson's first attitude toward Mossadegh was one of treating him openly and

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continuing to try to work out some negotiated settlement with the British which would meet British and American concerns.

It seems to me I was either in the passage of home leave and going to the desk as Henderson's attitude changed. I don't remember the exact date of my moving to the desk, but as I say, I was on the desk while Acheson was still Secretary.

The decision to overthrow Mossadegh was made, I believe, by [Walter B.] "Bedell" Smith, who was then Under Secretary and who, as you know, had come from the post in CIA, and who had been Chief of Staff to Eisenhower, so that you had a very tight family relationship there. You had Eisenhower as President, John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State, his brother Allen as the head of CIA, and Smith having been the closest associate of Eisenhower during the war and having been the deputy in CIA, now as the deputy in the State Department. So when "Bedell" spoke, he spoke not only with direct instructions, but also with a deep understanding of what his principals were thinking. I certainly was not present, but I've been told this by someone who was present, that CIA officers were in his office discussing Mossadegh, and "Bedell," who had a very bad stomach problem, may have clutched his stomach and groaned, or he may have said, "Dump him." (Laughs) But I have a feeling the decision was made that easily and that quickly, and then CIA went to work.

Now, they obviously did not work without involving Mr. Henderson. They changed the chief of station in Iran. Roger Gorian, I think, objected. In any case, he was transferred.

*Q: That's interesting, because from the records I've seen, he left in the fall of '52 before the AJAX plan was even—other people have said that same thing, that he objected. But I'm not sure.*

STUTESMAN: What did he object to?

*Q: I don't know.*

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STUTESMAN: I don't have it from his mouth, so maybe it's better if I don't even mention it. He's certainly worth talking to and, as I say, he's healthy and sharp down in Florida.

But they changed the chief of station. Henderson, I believe—now I understand there have been interviews with him on this general subject.

Q: Yes.

STUTESMAN: But I believe that Mr. Henderson had a deep reluctance to have a covert operation displace a chief of state. I think he had a long-term reluctance and a long-term sense of uneasiness about what this might do to the future. At the same time, I think that he faced a situation where there was very little alternative to the departure of Mossadegh.

I was on the desk, and as you probably know, I'm sure you know that you have the desk and then you have GTI, which is Greece, Turkey, and Iran, and the head of that was Arthur Richards, who had been my DCM in Tehran and now was my chief again in Washington. Above that you have the Assistant Secretary for Middle East Affairs, who was Hank Byroade. Then directly above that you have the Secretary of State and to the extent he involves his top people, under secretaries. The line was drawn at the assistant secretary level in terms of discussions of plans to overthrow Mossadegh. I think at a stage, Arthur Richards was informed, but the line was clearly drawn at the assistant secretary level and never got down to me. However, I don't tell you this to protect myself.(END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE; BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO)

STUTESMAN: I don't tell you this to protect myself, but to add that being an alert person, it became easily apparent to me that something was going wrong in Washington policy circles and, to some extent, in our actions in Iran, which could only be part of a program to become increasingly offensive to Mossadegh.

There was a very fine man named Joe Upton, who was in INR, which is the intelligence and research side. He had worked in Iran as an archeologist, I believe he had perhaps

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been involved in OSS during the war, and he was a very wise and thoughtful, gentle person, unhappily long dead. I sat down with Joe Upton and said to him—and I don't recollect the details, but basically I said to him, "Joe, obviously something is going on, and I have an uneasy feeling that if, indeed, there is to be an overthrow of Mossadegh and the development of a new government, no one is putting any attention on what we do then, that the work right now is all, as far as we know, on the issue of how do you overthrow Mossadegh."

So he and I sat down and drew up what we called a "what if" paper. What if Mossadegh fell? What would we do then? What would be required? We didn't do this in an attempt to smoke out our superiors, but more than that, we were concerned that, in fact, something could happen and then everybody would stand around with their thumbs up their ears and say, "Oh, well, what now?"

*Q: And for some consequences.*

STUTESMAN: Yes. I have no idea what happened to the "what if" paper in terms of Department's archives, but it was a formal paper which we submitted to Arthur Richards and which went on up the line. Indeed, after Mossadegh fell, I was present at a meeting in Dulles' office, the Secretary's office, and at that time he had Phleger, who was his legal counsel, and Dulles didn't do hardly anything without the legal counsel involved. And Byroade, I remember, and Arthur Richards, and the policy people.

*Q: The policy planning staff people?*

STUTESMAN: There were, I'd say, ten people. They were sitting around and, indeed, they were working to some extent from my paper. I remember there was some discussion. Dulles was not very interested, in my recollection. But the question was how much money to give to Zahedi. I think Byroade asked for, say, 20 million, and somebody else said, "Oh, God, we don't have that. We don't have anything."

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So Dulles said, "How about 10 million?" And everybody said okay. So you have these, to me, not atypical decisions. I think that "Beedle" Smith decided to dump Mossadegh in a brief interview with some CIA officers, and I think that Dulles decided to start passing money to Zahedi in a very casual meeting. That doesn't mean that a whole lot of people weren't working constantly, like me, but again, I come back to these concerns that there was some very carefully calculated policy. I really don't think that our policy on Iran was worked out, certainly not on the basis of any conspiracy, but on the basis of sort of, "Well, Jesus, what do we do now? Oh, okay, let's get rid of him. Now—oops, well, now, okay, we've got to give him some money. Well, why don't we give \$10 million. Okay." And then the workers go to work, Henderson and some of the others.

Having said that I believe he was deeply reluctant, Henderson's role was nonetheless to carry out policy, and he very carefully developed an attitude and helped to sponsor an attitude in Iran that Mossadegh was leading the country to ruin and to Communist control. Whether Henderson believed that or not, I don't know, but that's certainly the way he worked. He did it, including removing himself from the scene. I don't remember the exact timing, but it seems to me that he was out of Iran.

*Q: On vacation, I think.*

STUTESMAN: Yes. Of course, it's so unlike Henderson to take a holiday right in the middle of a crisis. All of these things were worked out. I don't think these were things that he and [Kermit] Roosevelt cooked up in a back room; I think these are things that Mr. Henderson and Roosevelt and others worked out. But there was no doubt in my mind that there was a carefully developed, coordinated State Department-CIA plan leading toward the eventual overthrow of Mossadegh.

*Q: This all raises a lot of questions, but I want to back up a little bit. In the period when you were still in Tehran, 1951-52, how much concern was there in the embassy about the influence of the Tudeh, local Communist Party or movement?*

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STUTESMAN: A great deal. In a curious way, more when I first arrived than when I left. Because in 1949, when I arrived, it was very fresh in all our minds that the Communists, Russians, had attempted to hold on to Azerbaijan after the war, and that it was only through a struggle in the United Nations that they were forced out. In my dispatch on the Shah, I have as an enclosure a letter written by Ambassador George Allen that letter is a marvelous description of how the Shah reached a point where he took a decisive action which led to the fall of Qom, which had an effect on the Azerbaijani problem, and which supported the idea that the Shah could be a reliable leader and a reliable pro-Western leader.

So that when I arrived in '49, the Tudeh was still viewed as a danger, because it had been damn near successful dismembering a part of Iran. Whether that was an accurate appraisal of the actual strength of the Tudeh, I don't know. I remember that when the National Front came in, there were concerns that the Tudeh was an influence within the National Front, then there were concerns that the Tudeh was in opposition to the National Front, then there were concerns that the Tudeh would be the heir of the National Front. I don't remember any serious details, certainly not scholarly study, of those issues. There may be some in the CIA files, but I don't remember any in the State Department.

*Q: One document I've seen referred to was an October '52 CIA analysis estimating that the Tudeh lacked the capacity to overthrow the government.*

STUTESMAN: Oh, yes.

*Q: That was a commonly held assumption?*

STUTESMAN: Oh, yes, at that time.

*Q: Historians have argued that the embassy tended to overestimate the Tudeh's strength in the country, and also overestimated the degree that at some stages the*

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*Tudeh was cooperating implicitly or tacitly with National Front. Was the Tudeh's strength overestimated in some ways in reports back to Washington?*

STUTESMAN: As my last comment indicated, I don't really remember the embassy being especially concerned about the Tudeh after the National Front came to power, except for the sense that in a complete disarray, the Tudeh could become heirs of power. But there I think the concern ran more to the Soviet neighbor and the Soviet influence than it did to a serious nationwide deeply ingrained Tudeh force. That's my feeling.

*Q: From what I've read in this article which I'll show you later, apparently the CIA had penetrated the Tudeh party at the very highest levels. Was this something that you knew about?*

STUTESMAN: No, I didn't.

*Q: In the fall of '51, Mossadegh had about six weeks in the U.S., where he represented his case on nationalization to the UN and met at great length with Acheson and George McGhee to continue discussions on the oil question and work out a basis for compromise with the British, and the newly elected conservative government in Britain rejected the compromise that McGhee and Mossadegh worked out back in Washington. They were staying at the Shoreham Hotel and many discussions were being held there. I guess the British rejected the compromise because it still left nationalization intact, and the British Government rejected any prospect of agreeing on the question of nationalization. Do you know if Acheson tried to apply any pressure on Eden and the British conservatives to get the British to accept some kind of a compromise plan that would be worked out in Washington at this stage?*

STUTESMAN: I have no personal knowledge of that. I may have been aware of it, but I don't remember anything like that. I don't remember preparing any papers which he would have used in talking to Eden.

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*Q: Apparently by around January 1952, from what I've read, Acheson was concluding that it was likely that no settlement would be reached with Mossadegh. Was the thinking at the embassy around this time, early '52, pretty much on the same lines, that it would be very likely that there would be no settlement?*

STUTESMAN: January, 1952? When did Eisenhower come?

*Q: This is still a year before the Republicans coming in.*

STUTESMAN: When did Harriman come out?

*Q: 1951. So this is seven months later, I guess.*

STUTESMAN: Again, my recollection, without any reference to notes or anything or a chronology, is that Acheson and his senior advisors, Nitze was one of them, they never quit trying to negotiate with Mossadegh. That's my recollection. Again, it's possible that I'm looking back with a long telescope, but I recall my feeling that it was almost pathetic, these very senior men, they got so excited. They were all like children and they'd get all excited, wonderful, you know, and they'd be out there, gonna solve a world problem. Again, I may just make this up as I think back, but my own recollection is that they were pathetic, these men, compared to someone like Henderson, who was so steady and so long-term. If Mr. Acheson did feel that it was a useless proposition, he certainly, it seems to me, did not stop his people, Hank Byroade, whom I like. Hank Byroade was a good chief. But these guys would get together and they had a thrill. It was like fighting the war for them.

*Q: I read that also around the same time, late '51, early '52, that Ambassador Henderson was trying to get the Shah to replace Mossadegh with someone who was more readily agreeable on a compromise on the oil question with the British. Did you know about what Henderson was thinking at this stage?*

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STUTESMAN: I don't remember that. I think it's very natural that Henderson would have discussed with the Shah the possibility of getting somebody in. Does it say who his candidate was? Was it Zahedi then?

*Q: No, it was easier. It was somebody else. Hussein Ala, I think.*

STUTESMAN: Everybody loved old Hussein Ala. He was a sweet man and had done such a good job on the Azerbaijani issue. Anyhow, my answer is that I don't really have the knowledge of it.

*Q: When did you leave Iran for your assignment in Washington?*

STUTESMAN: It had to be in '52. I was there nearly three years, mid'49 to early '52. In any case, I was in Washington on the desk while Acheson was still Secretary, so it had to be in '52 at the latest.

*Q: So you returned to Washington to serve as desk officer? Was that immediate?*

STUTESMAN: I was transferred directly from Tehran. I had home leave, and then went to the desk, where I held the great title of Officer-in-Charge of Iranian Affairs.

*Q: Who else worked at the desk? Did you have an assistant?*

STUTESMAN: Yes, there was somebody in the economic section. And there was somebody else who was in my own office. I'm ashamed to say I don't remember any names. But looking upwards, it was Arthur Richards who was my boss. The partnership between me and Arthur Richards had been formed in Iran and just kept on going on the desk. I don't think I had much of a staff. There was an economic section in GTI, and there was a man in that section who dealt with Iranian affairs. It seems to me his name was Bernie Crowl.

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*Q: Around this time, '52, early '53, who were the other agencies working on Iranian issues? For example, the Defense Department, Treasury, or Justice, because they had an interest in the question of anti-trust and oil companies. Or CIA, for that matter.*

STUTESMAN: At my level, desk officer, my partner in INR was Joe Upton, and, of course, INR is direct liaison with the intelligence community, the CIA. Nonetheless, at the same time I had both old friendships and also official relations with Roger Goiran, who was then the CIA director for Middle East covert action, and John Waller, who was his assistant, dealing primarily with Iran. I knew Kim Roosevelt, but I was in no way involved with him at that time. So informally, I would be in touch with the two CIA principals at my bureaucratic level, and also socially I saw them.

You asked about the military. I don't remember having much in the way of a connection to Defense Department people. They certainly were represented from time to time in large groups, but in terms of day-to-day or even weekly contacts, I don't remember picking up the phone and checking in with somebody in the Defense Department. Obviously, Henderson had military attach#s and there was a military mission.

Treasury, again, I don't remember any particular involvement with Treasury at my level, although at very senior levels, obviously, there would be representatives from Treasury, particularly when you were talking about oil.

The Justice Department, the only time that I saw a direct involvement—and I have no idea of the date—there was a summons by the President, and I think by this time Herbert Hoover, Jr., was Under Secretary, so I'm talking about that time. Anyhow, there was a gathering of senior representatives of American oil companies in the State Department, and they met in a conference room up in the Secretary's area, and I was present. I know that there was a great deal of prior clearance with the Justice Department, which had to be satisfactory to the oil companies before they stepped in the same room. That was done, but that was not done at my level.

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*Q: How would you describe your responsibilities as a principal officer?*

STUTESMAN: Desk officer.

*Q: Desk officer.*

STUTESMAN: Principal officer would be a term for somebody overseas. I was officer in charge.

*Q: That's what I meant, exactly.*

STUTESMAN: First of all, it meant that that's all I thought about, aside from my family. It meant that on a daily basis I dealt with all reports from the embassy, all requests for response from the embassy, and all directives sent to the embassy, either by doing them myself or by clearing them. It meant that I was a source of information to anybody senior to me in the Department, which included most of the Department, although by then I had risen rather quickly in the Service, but I was still a desk officer. I was the source of information to people in the Security Council. They'd have meetings in which they would work on the Iranian policy issue. I would be called to supply papers and to provide information to people working at that level, or I would be constantly summoned up to the Secretary's office.

Then, of course, during the night, in those days what we had in the State Department were watch officers. A telegram would come in, which the watch officer would think was significant enough to call me and waken me, and I would get in my car and drive down and read it. If I thought it was important enough, I would even wake a senior officer up, but generally I wouldn't. I would then go to work on it first thing in the morning. That's what I did.

*Q: During this period, the CIA wrote estimates on the Iranian situation. I have one here, a Xerox copy, "The Prospects for Survival of the Mossadegh Regime in Iran," dated October*

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*14, 1952, produced, I guess, at their offices in Washington. Do you know who wrote the estimates, who on their staff would write these? They're called national intelligence estimates, NIEs.*

STUTESMAN: No. I wasn't on distribution.

*Q: You weren't? Who in the State Department followed closely the oil policy issues?*

STUTESMAN: I think, for one thing, Walter Levy was on a continuing consultant basis. For another thing, of course, the very senior people such as Phleger, who, after all, had been the legal counsel for Sun Oil here, maybe Standard of Cal, and then the economic section, the Assistant Secretary for Economic Affairs. Those were people who dealt with that sort of thing. I don't remember any oil company officer either calling me or coming to see me, but when they had their meetings and when we worked out policies, I would, of course, be informed, or any instruction that went to the embassy, I'd get a copy or indeed it would pass through my hands.

When I talk to you about not being on the distribution list for CIA data, that's not unusual. The CIA, after all, supplies its information, first of all, to its own principals, but then through controlled channels to the State Department. So there would be a senior officer in the INR, intelligence research area, who would then presumably make the decision whether or not it would reach me, I guess.

*Q: Maybe Upton would see it, perhaps, because he was in INR.*

STUTESMAN: Perhaps, although not necessarily. I'm not saying I didn't see some of their stuff, but I certainly was not on a routine distribution. In other words, it wouldn't come direct across to me; it would pass through their controlled channels, which I think is correct.

*Q: Do you recall who Iran's ambassador in Washington was at this stage, when you were desk officer in 1952?*

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STUTESMAN: I don't.

*Q: Did you have much dealings with their embassy?*

STUTESMAN: I remember social relationships more than I do official relationships. Yes, of course we did. We had all kinds of conversations, but not on policy issues. I don't think that we, the State Department, used the Iranian ambassador much as a channel to Mossadegh.

*Q: Mostly just through Henderson?*

STUTESMAN: It was through Henderson, yes.

*Q: In February 1952, the World Bank vice president, Robert Garner, headed another attempt to reach a settlement on the oil issue, and he traveled to Iran and met with Mossadegh and the embassy staff, and tried to reach a compromise. Do you know how closely Garner coordinated his efforts with the State Department?*

STUTESMAN: I don't know. Was Grady still there?

*Q: It would be Henderson in early '52.*

STUTESMAN: Henderson. Again, knowing Mr. Henderson, he would not have let Garner just travel around loose. He would have been closely involved. But I don't remember any particular experience that's worth telling about.

*Q: During this period, the U.S. was still providing to Iran Point IV technical assistance.*

STUTESMAN: That's right.

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*Q: Plus Military Assistance Program, MAP aid, as it was called then. But there was no general-purpose economic assistance, no balance of payments support or whatever. Did Mossadegh make many requests for aid to the U.S. for general support?*

STUTESMAN: I don't remember any. I have no idea. Again, I just keep hitting this drum, but it's basic to all of this, in my opinion. Mossadegh wasn't counting pennies; Mossadegh was counting on the United States to buy his oil, to protect him from the Russians, and to kick the British out. I'm just convinced of that. But whether the old man ever said, "I'd like to have another 10 million to build roads," or something, I don't remember anything like that. His people may have mentioned it. Certainly he had around him some pretty grasping types who may have wanted money, but I don't remember Mossadegh really discussing seriously with us economic aid.

*Q: By June of '52, from what I've read, Henderson was giving quiet support to Ahmad Qom as replacement for Mossadegh.*

STUTESMAN: Yes.

*Q: Would it be fair to assume that he was doing this with the full knowledge of the State Department, the higher-ups like Acheson or Acheson's deputies?*

STUTESMAN: Oh, certainly. Henderson never made a significant move without having it either cleared in advance or informing them. But again, I don't remember. I was startled when you told me that Qom was even in the play then. He was an old geezer by then.

*Q: You had had contact with him when you were in Tehran?*

STUTESMAN: Yes, socially.

*Q: In July of '52, Mossadegh had a struggle with the Shah over control of the military. Mossadegh briefly resigned as prime minister and was temporarily replaced by Qom*

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*for five or six days. Qom was only temporarily in power, because there were massive street protests in Tehran, forcing Qom to resign, and Mossadegh was put back in power, reappointed. Again, this might have been at a higher level of discussion at this stage, but did the U.S. Government have any plans or proposals to support Qom politically or financially so he could keep his power as prime minister?*

STUTESMAN: As far as I know, there was nothing in place.

*Q: During the early 1950s, maybe in the late 1940s, the CIA had a covert program in Iran called BEDAMN, which the article I gave you by Gasiorowski discusses. Probably the basic purpose of BEDAMN was to counter the influence of the Tudeh and the Soviet Union in Iran. Did you know about this program's existence? It's only come to light recently, apparently.*

STUTESMAN: No, I did not, but I did know, of course, that there were American intelligence personnel in Iran. I also knew then, and still know, that a good deal of our work in Iran was really directed north to the neighbor there. One of my great happy memories is that there was a man, an Army officer, but on the intelligence side, named Alex Gagarine. I think he's still alive, but I think he's in Brazil, an American out of a great Russian family, of course. He retired. He lived in Washington for a while. They gave a Russian Easter party, and Archie Roosevelt was there. He's the man whose wife was or may still be Chief of Protocol in the State Department.

*Q: That's right. Selwa.*

STUTESMAN: At one point during the rather bibulous occasion, Gagarine and Archie Roosevelt put their arms around each other and sang the Azerbaijani "national" anthem, remembering their happy days when they were intelligence officers, American officers, up there in Azerbaijan, helping to get the Russians out. So sure, I knew of American intelligence operations in Iran, but as I say, I always thought of them, except for the business with Mossadegh, I always thought it was primarily concerned with external

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affairs. And certainly while the British were running Iran, the American intelligence agencies were not, I am convinced, were not trying to overthrow or control any governments in Iran. The British would have squashed it.

*Q: Apparently, after the British were forced out in late '52, their embassy staff had to leave Iran, their intelligence people had to leave the country lock, stock, and barrel. By this point, by the fall of '52, apparently the BEDAMN program also started to target the National Front. The idea was, so I've read, to create or exacerbate internal divisions in the Front, to separate its leadership from its mass social base, and the ultimate goal apparently was to undermine or destabilize Mossadegh's government. Was there any word in Washington about this kind of a program?*

STUTESMAN: I wasn't personally familiar with it. It makes sense to me. I think it's very reasonable that what you've said is true, but I don't know.

*Q: In November '52, C.M. Woodhouse, whom you mentioned earlier, of the British SIS, was sent to Washington to seek U.S. support for a tentative plan to overthrow Mossadegh. He discussed this in his memoirs. Apparently Woodhouse met with some State Department officials. Would this again have been with the people at the assistant secretary level that he would have met with? Did you know about his arrival in Washington?*

STUTESMAN: My guess is, in his memoirs, when he says State Department officials, he means CIA.

*Q: He discusses it as a separate category from CIA, so I guess he went to the Department offices.*

STUTESMAN: Because it's like Kim, you know. Kim Roosevelt had to withdraw the first run of his book because the British objected to some of his references. My answer is no. I knew Woodhouse in Iran, and I may have seen him socially when he came to Washington,

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although I don't remember it, but certainly I was not involved in any negotiations or discussions.

*Q: Around this time, before the British were expelled, they were working with the Rashidian brothers and General Zahedi in a plan to overthrow Mossadegh. The British had this ongoing circle of people that they were working with, with the aim of overthrowing the prime minister. Did you know the Rashidian brothers when you were in Tehran?*

STUTESMAN: By name. They were merchants in the bazaar and they were known as influential people, but no. Again, you're asking me about things which had to do with covert activities, and believe me, junior officers in an embassy don't...

*Q: They were not in the loop, as they say these days.*

STUTESMAN: No, and they shouldn't be.

*Q: In January '53, there was a final effort to work out a compromise. This effort had been made under Acheson and was presented to Mossadegh early that year as one of the last acts of the Truman Administration as it was leaving the scene. Mossadegh turned down the plan which the U.S. had offered. Apparently, one of the reasons that Mossadegh turned the plan down was that the British insisted that compensation for nationalization would take into account not only the value of AIOC's properties in Iran, but also the future earnings that AIOC would be deprived of through nationalization, future profits based upon its long-term contract with the government of Iran. Was this question discussed at the desk, this question of the compromise plan and the British insistence upon future earnings being compensated for?*

STUTESMAN: I'm sure it was. That's not the sort of thing that would have been kept in a special category. But I don't remember.

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*Q: Did you do any work on this compromise plan yourself? Would you have been involved in drafting it?*

STUTESMAN: Yes.

*Q: Putting it together?*

STUTESMAN: I suppose so, but I don't remember. Day-to-day work would range from the most pedestrian thing, like somebody trying to locate an American child taking a bus across Iran, to working on National Security Council issues. But I just don't remember.

*Q: At the time that the Eisenhower Administration was coming into power early in '53, how would you characterize the approach that Eisenhower and Dulles took to Iran in this very early stage?*

STUTESMAN: I've already indicated one specific thing. If I can reduce it to the question of attitude toward Mossadegh, rather than attitude toward Iran, I can speak with some authority. There, as I indicated, I believe that the decision was transmitted by "Beedle" Smith to the CIA officers in an official fashion in "Beedle's" office, to dump Mossadegh, and that Smith was at that time speaking for not only his President and his boss, but also his former boss, Allen Dulles.

*Q: How would you explain the basis for this hostility to Mossadegh?*

STUTESMAN: I think two bases. One is a more realistic, at least in my opinion, a more realistic assessment of whether you could negotiate with Mossadegh, or whether you had to just sweep him off the board. That's one aspect. Another aspect is the Republicans who came in, I mean, Foster Dulles was one of the most disagreeable, tough-minded people I've ever known, and I knew him pretty well. I delivered the top-secret morning report to him. This is when I was in his Secretariat. Every morning I would hand it to him personally for a year, and he never said "good morning" to me or anything. I might have been the air.

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Many other people have made these comments. This is a man who was a very realistic, a very cold fellow. And Allen Dulles, who had a lot more charm, nonetheless was also a very cool customer. And President Eisenhower, after all, commanded one of the great coalitions in military history and, despite his grin, could be a very tough boy. Those men, with “Beedle” Smith, those four men, those are very tough customers. They're a quantum leap from people like Nitze and Byroade, who just loved the excitement. The world was their playpen, and they were so happy just moving things around. That didn't happen again until Kennedy brought in his crowd of young people, and they treated the world the same way, with equally—no, more—disastrous results, because I would say Acheson's work stood to the test of time very well. So that's the other basis.

We had in charge of foreign policy some very tough customers who did not think of the world as a playpen; they thought of the world as a very serious place, and if somebody was giving you trouble, you knocked him off one way or another. Those are the two reasons.

*Q: How did fear of communism enter into their calculations about the situation in Iran?*

STUTESMAN: I don't think a lot.

*Q: They were not that concerned about the Tudeh party?*

STUTESMAN: I don't think Foster Dulles or Eisenhower gave a damn about the Tudeh Party. They were conscious, of course, of strategic and global considerations, naturally, but I think they were just fed up with this guy Mossadegh. You know, “Push him aside.” They didn't want to kill him. “Push him aside and let's move on. Let's stop all this crap.”

*Q: To get to the oil business.*

STUTESMAN: Yes, okay. I'm sure the oil business was an element. Also, Eden and Acheson didn't get on at all well, but Eden and Dulles got along wonderfully.

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*Q: I thought Eden and Acheson got along well, because I've seen their correspondence at Yale, and it seems very friendly in its tenor. Maybe later on, they...*

STUTESMAN: I don't think so. I think they had a hard time with each other. In any case, the British and Eisenhower got on just fine. After all, Eisenhower spent four rather significant years working very closely with them. So I would say the British, probably by this time, they also had more realistic people in charge of those affairs, and I think it was just a concatenation of people who were prepared to take a new and realistic look at Iran, and they saw Mossadegh as a problem.

*Q: In his memoirs, C.M. Woodhouse discusses his visits to Washington, which I mentioned a few minutes ago, and he played up the anti-communist aspect, fear of communism, with the CIA people and State Department people in order to get them to take a stronger interest in the British plan to overthrow Mossadegh. Does that make sense to you that the British might have played up the role of anti-communism to encourage American interests, to support their goals?*

STUTESMAN: Sure. Americans in those years twitched when you said the word "communist," and with some good reason. Certainly the Eisenhower people that came to power on an expression of, almost a suggestion that, the Democrats had been traitors at Yalta and so on, so that sure, that was a good button to push. But again, I'm speaking without any personal knowledge of these men's thinking, but my feeling is that the main thing that happened was you had a whole new crowd in, and the top men were very tough, very realistic, and did not want to play games with the world, and the other is they faced a table loaded with failed negotiations of all kinds, of good-faith negotiations, and they just didn't want to do any more of that. So the two things came together. The communist element, sure, it was part of it, but I think it can be overexaggerated.

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*Q: You mentioned earlier that you had gotten a sense that something was going on in terms of American planning to overthrow Mossadegh, and you prepared a paper, a sort of "what if" paper. Do you recall the date?*

STUTESMAN: No. When did Mossadegh fall?

*Q: In August of '53.*

STUTESMAN: This would have been in mid-summer of '53, I guess.

*Q: That you did this paper?*

STUTESMAN: Yes. And I don't mean that I embarrassed my chief, Arthur Richards, by insisting on being informed, but I must admit I would say, "Come on, is something going on that I don't know about?" And men like Jack Jernegan and Byroade were both friends, as well as superiors, and they wouldn't say anything to me.

*Q: Richards wouldn't tell you anything either?*

STUTESMAN: No, no. It was part of the rule. I mean, the line was drawn at the Assistant Secretary, and then it shifted down eventually to the office director, and that was it. But on the other hand, it became increasingly apparent that something was going on. Fraser Wilkins, he's still alive in Washington, who was then an officer in the policy planning council, and he felt that something was going on, and he leaned hard on me, which was his mistake, and I kept saying to him, "Why don't you talk to Jack Jernegan?" who was a personal friend and contemporary colleague. Fraser has never forgiven me for not telling him, and I keep telling him, "Fraser, I didn't know." (Laughs) Anyhow, that's when Upton and I decided that something was going on that could lead to a change of government and somebody ought to be thinking about that.(END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO)

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*Q: Some months before you got wind of the possible coup plans, the spring of '53, Mossadegh wrote to President Eisenhower, requesting U.S. financial assistance. Eisenhower turned the request down, saying that there would be no aid to Iran until settlement of the oil issue had been made. Who would have drafted Eisenhower's reply? Would you have worked on it at the NSC level or someone in the White House?*

STUTESMAN: I suppose I would have worked on it, but I don't remember. Is this when the argument was, "How could the American people understand our giving you money at a time when you have great resources that you could turn into money?"

*Q: That's exactly the tenor of his letter, yes.*

STUTESMAN: I think probably I had a role in it.

*Q: His response suggests in some way that the oil issue had great bearing upon his basic attitude towards Mossadegh.*

STUTESMAN: I understand.

*Q: I have some questions about the development of the coup plans which have come to light in Roosevelt's book and some of the articles I've given you, but you've already answered them to some extent when you discussed your non-relationship to the principals involved in this. I guess I can ask you this, though. What were your impressions of the political situation in Iran, based on your reading of the cables coming back from Tehran? What was your impression of what was going on during the months before Mossadegh was overthrown?*

STUTESMAN: You are asking me to be pretty precise about something a long way ago. My feeling is that, first of all, and the men I worked with had complete confidence in Mr. Henderson and his staff in appraising the situation and in reporting on it. I think probably

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we felt that Mossadegh was losing the confidence of a lot of Iranians, but that's about as far as I can go now.

*Q: From what I've read in Roosevelt's account and elsewhere, when Mossadegh arrested Colonel Nassiri, when Mossadegh learned that he was about to be arrested or overturned by Zahedi, and when this first coup plan failed, the Shah fled the country to Iraq, I think.*

STUTESMAN: And then Rome.

*Q: And then Rome. That's right. Do you recall this turn of events, what your reaction was when you heard about this effort to oust Mossadegh?*

STUTESMAN: No, I don't. I obviously was informed. That sort of thing I would have been informed on. Just a story. The poor Iranian ambassador at Rome was a man who had been the chief of protocol of the court, and he had received instructions from Mossadegh not to meet the Shah, so he didn't meet the Shah. But a young business man there who was an Iranian, just a very nice fellow, went out to greet the Shah. After the Shah returned to power, that little guy in Rome was given a high position at the court.

*Q: When the first effort failed, the CIA people regrouped, in their efforts to work with their contacts in the bazaar and elsewhere to develop crowds that would take a role in moving against Mossadegh. I guess they went to the military, to Zahedi and his people, and they were able to implement a successful coup which led to the overthrow of Mossadegh. After this had happened, did you learn more about the CIA's role in this episode in the following months or year when you were at the desk?*

STUTESMAN: Oh, yes, it all opened up a good deal, and also the CIA withdrew from at least visibly active involvement. What happened after the coup, after Mossadegh fell and the new government was formed was an intense concentration on helping the new government to get established, giving the new government a chance to breathe and, as I

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say, an instant supply of money, and giving the Shah support, and then also working on them to develop ways to get income from the oil.

I realize I seem to be describing the oil settlement in terms of providing income to the Iranians, and you, it seems to me, generally are suggesting that the Iranian oil settlement was a way of supplying profit to the oil companies. Both points of view are correct, but my feeling is the American Government at that time was primarily concerned with supplying income to the Iranians.

*Q: As a basis for stability.*

STUTESMAN: Yes, and less concerned with making a deal for the oil companies. The two are inextricably connected, but if you have to give way to one side or another, my recollection is that the weight ran more to, "Okay, Mossadegh's gone, there's a new government there, there's a new chance. Let's help it work." Of course, also they could pretty much push the British to the side. I mean, we were in the lead now.

*Q: I want to take a few steps back to the question of the coup and the CIA's role in the coup. On the basis of the information that you had been able to get at the desk in the following year or two, could you say how important the U.S. role was in the overthrow of Mossadegh was? Was the U.S. role decisive or incidental? How would you characterize that?*

STUTESMAN: I've heard it described in a number of different ways by Mr. Henderson, by Kim [Kermit Roosevelt], by others. I believe that its success is evidence that it was based on natural forces. There were broad forces which supported the idea of a more stable government, a government which could open up connections again to the West, and the Shah was popular. I do not think, however, that it would have happened then without outside instigation. And the two go together.

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*Q: A few months after the coup, Vice President Nixon met with the Shah in Iran during the course of a long trip through Asia.*

STUTESMAN: I'd forgotten that.

*Q: Did his visit have any special political significance, the Vice President stopping to see the Shah during the course of a tour of the Near East and the Far East?*

STUTESMAN: I don't remember that at all, but I think it's a good idea, and certainly the Shah must have gotten a good deal of self esteem out of it.

*Q: A show of political support by the U.S.*

STUTESMAN: Oh, yes. A senior official. I mean, the President's the only next one in their eyes.

*Q: A number of historians and analysts have argued that during the years of '53 into the early 1960s, that the Shah and Iran were in sort of a tutelage relationship with the United States. The U.S. was sort of like a tutor in terms of developing Iranian institutions, sort of a subordinate relationship between the two countries. From your vantage point in the State Department, how true was that, that Iran was kind of a client state, was in a subordinate relationship with the United States?*

STUTESMAN: I think that client state description is exaggerated.

*Q: Okay.*

STUTESMAN: Both the best and the worst of American foreign policy involvement came into play here. The best is, of course, the generous, idealistic American attitude toward helping other people. The worst is the sense of assuming responsibility for whatever happens. In other words, the sparrow falls in the forest it's our fault and our responsibility. The vast aid programs which developed in Iran, in a sardonic way, I would say that they

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had very little effect except in one regard which they were not proposing as an objective. What they did was, they employed at middle management levels young men and even some women who were educated and who were honest and who were thereby protected from the corrupting influences of regular Iranian society and Iranian government, and were allowed to grow and to develop and also worked toward idealistic objectives. I don't think of that as making Iran a client state at all. I think it may have developed, long after I'd left the desk, into false relationships between us and Iran.

But while I was on the desk, our involvement with Iran was extraordinarily idealistic. It was a desire to help, and in the helping, we used these really good young people who otherwise might have been damaged or wasted. Am I sounding passionate? Anyhow, I feel that way.

*Q: That's interesting.*

STUTESMAN: I also think you have to be careful to divide the first years of the Shah's accession to power after the fall of Mossadegh from what happened later. It's a progression, and there's a connection, but the first years, there was no secret police of any significance, there was no serious repression that I knew of, at least of political opponents. It was a halcyon period.

*Q: One of the main goals of the State Department after the coup was to settle the petroleum dispute. You mentioned earlier the basic goal was to provide Iran with income as a basis for a more stable political situation and also a way to tie the oil companies into managing resources in a way that would provide income to both parties. The first step of this process were Anglo-American discussions during the fall of '53. They were designed to lead somehow to settlement that would work for all parties concerned. Did you take part in any of these discussions?*

STUTESMAN: Yes. Herbert Hoover, Jr., as you know, was brought into play by Eisenhower. Mr. Hoover was a man of great distinction in the oil community. He had a

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reputation for absolute probity. His firm—at least I was told the story—his firm was so trusted by the oil companies that two competing oil companies would both contract with him to perform surveys in the same general area. He was a man much affected by his own experience as the child of a prominent person. This caused him, among other things, to be deeply suspicious of anyone getting close to him. But at the same time, it meant that he could move easily in the world of power. He had grown up in it and he was used to it. I think he was probably a much better single person moving as an independent consultant and working on individual things as a person than he was as an Under Secretary of State, where he had to deal with a great organization.

While I was desk officer, he was hired to be the catalyst and the leader of the American negotiations, which were successful in his point of view and, as far as I'm concerned, my point of view. Then he became Under Secretary of State. When he got settled he found himself surrounded by the Secretariat, and Mr. Hoover said, "Well, now, who are these people who are reading my mail and are around me?"

"I don't see anybody like, say, well, like John Stutesman." Of course, they didn't know who in the hell I was.

The next thing I knew, I got a phone call from somebody, saying, "We'd like to have you transferred to the Secretariat. Mr. Hoover has expressed an interest in you."

I said, "Okay." And that was that. I was shifted off the desk and put up in the Secretariat.

I tell you all that partially because it amuses me how life is affected by things, but also to show you that Mr. Hoover and I worked closely together and I had a close involvement with him.

Now, how involved was I in the negotiations? Well, I was as involved as a staff officer can be with the additional responsibility of running the Iranian desk. Did I understand major world oil policy? The answer is, no, certainly not. Did I spend a lot of time worrying about

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whether Texaco and Standard Oil of California were able to get together? Not at all. But I was present, as I told you, when this group of senior people were placed in a room after the attorney general cleared it. Brownell, was he the attorney general?

*Q: That's right. Herbert Brownell*

STUTESMAN: These names come back. I didn't travel with Mr. Hoover. He didn't take people with him. He was a very private person. But I carried his bag a great deal in Washington for him going from here to there.

*Q: Was Howard Page of Standard Oil of New Jersey, I think, involved in the discussions?*

STUTESMAN: Perhaps. I don't remember.

*Q: You don't remember him at all? Did Loy Henderson play a role in the outcome?*

STUTESMAN: Certainly, working from the Tehran point of view. I don't remember Mr. Henderson being called back. The records would show if he was. My own feeling is that he ran the show in Tehran. He and Mr. Hoover got on very, very well.

*Q: In terms of the issues, how difficult was it to convince the British to yield their position running Iranian oil through AIOC and accept a multinational consortium where they would only have a share? Was this a typical problem?*

STUTESMAN: Of course. Yes. And Hoover did a splendid job. Looking back, I would say that the main stick we had was the British Government, which really overwhelmed the AIOC and forced the AIOC to come to terms. The range of reasons for that range from the British diplomats who probably resented the old AIOC control over their policies in Iran, to a very sensible realization that the oil company could not return to its old situation, and that the thing to do was get the best they could out of it.

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*Q: Interesting. How was it that the French and Dutch companies were also brought into the picture? The French company and Royal Dutch Shell also had a share in the consortium.*

STUTESMAN: Well, clearly, the reason was that the Iranians had to have less than 50% English, and the Dutch were brought in because Shell is a Dutch company, or was a Dutch company, but also the British influence was considerable within it, I think. So that the Iranians who, believe me, were never fooled by any of these things, the Iranians, nevertheless, clearly were willing to put across to their people the idea that the British had been reduced to less than 50%, whereas the English were able to say, "Well, okay, maybe, but in fact, we have more than 50% of a hand in this." I'm looking way back and I haven't thought about these things in a long time. I don't study the literature on it. But that's my reaction to how the Dutch—and who else?

*Q: Also the French.*

STUTESMAN: That's funny. I don't remember the French being in it at all.

*Q: They had a minor, small percentage of the consortium.*

STUTESMAN: I don't remember that.

*Q: According to some declassified NSC documents from late '53, early '54, the Department of Defense was taking the position that if the British had not come to a settlement with Iran on the issues we've talked about, that the U.S. should act independently in Iran to reach a settlement on the oil question, ignore the British, basically. What problems would have led the Pentagon to take such a position? Does this ring a bell?*

STUTESMAN: It doesn't ring any bell at all, and I find it very foolish. Herbert Hoover, Jr., would no more have allowed that to happen than he would have fallen out the window.

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*Q: Of course, there wasn't, but that was the Pentagon view, apparently. It was thrashed out at the NSC level.*

In early January '54, the executive secretary of the NSC, James Lay, Jr., NSC executive secretary, presented a report to the council on U.S. policy towards Iran, which was called NSC 5402. It discussed issues such as economic and military aid to Iran, the oil settlement. Various parts are still sanitized, so I don't know what else was discussed, probably the CIA role in the country, intelligence issues. I'm not sure. Were you a member of the working group that would have drafted this report to that council?

STUTESMAN: I would have been, and I don't remember that particular paper, certainly not by number. Many days I would spend sitting in the outside room of the NSC. The men I went with were Fraser Wilkins, and there was a red-headed Foreign Service officer, I can't think of his name now, very good, very effective, and another man. In any case, I would frequently be the first point for the development of a new paper. In other words, the request, the decision for a revised paper would start with the desk. That's typical. The council discussion would always start at staff level. I'd sit behind the State Department principals, and frequently speak. Then I would be asked to leave and they would deal with, say, the CIA paper or something like that. So what I'm trying to describe to you is there was always a break off at my level of separate arguments.

Then I have a feeling that there might well have been times when they'd bring in the specialist on the oil, maybe, or something, and whether I was there or not would not have anything to do with secrecy; it would have to do with whether I'd go on back about my business. Chances are I would stay.

But if you ask me about a particular paper, the answer is I don't remember.

*Q: But you played a role in drafting on a routine basis.*

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STUTESMAN: Yes, routine. Routine, yes. I mean, that's the basic way. As I say, I distinctly remember day after day going with these fine officers from the policy planning group and, for that matter, before going, sitting down and working over the papers with them.

*Q: Were these meetings of the Operations Coordinating Board, the OCB, that you would have been going to?*

STUTESMAN: Yes.

*Q: That was like a subgroup of the NSC, the technical level, I guess.*

STUTESMAN: Yes. Then I can also remember—I hadn't thought about this—at that time in the Department, the U.K. desk, which had another name, I've forgotten, but anyhow, the director.

*Q: British Commonwealth office? European Affairs, something like that?*

STUTESMAN: Hayden, was that his name? Anyhow, there was a man there who was almost notorious for his insistence on being involved in any policy paper or, for that matter, even instructions to the field which related in almost any way to the British interests. Well, of course, the British interests were so extensive, so pervasive, that it meant that this guy was constantly getting in your hair on things that really were not of great consequence to the King or Queen of England. So he was a thorn, I remember that. He was a problem in getting papers up to the Secretary or to the NSC in regard to Iran, because, as I remember, he took a sterner view of British interests in Iran than even the British Government. That's an aside. But I do remember actively being involved in development of policy papers which went all the way up to the NSC.

*Q: According to one of the updates of this NSC report, it was updated on a quarterly basis, perhaps, every three or four months, from April '54, which I've seen, Herbert Hoover, Jr., and Loy Henderson were trying to educate—that's the word that's used in the document*

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*—trying to educate Iranian leaders as to the realities of the international oil business. Do you know how they went about this educational mission? It's briefly discussed in this document, but not really described.*

STUTESMAN: My answer has to be, no, I don't know specifically, not because I was cut out, but because I don't remember. But both of those men, whom I knew so well, their view of education always was to be persuasive. They were never patronizing, either of those men, to any Iranian or to other people. Both of them believed that successful negotiations depended on mutual trust and on honesty, basic honesty. Many times I've been involved with both of those men when they would tell the other person things which showed up weaknesses on our side of things that the other person should be concerned about dealing with us. Never, of course, betraying, but making clear that a proper settlement had to be based on understanding and trust. So I think that's what they mean by education. But in terms of what papers or what techniques, there wasn't anything covert about it, I'll assure you that.

*Q: That same month, April '54, the U.S. and British began negotiations with the Iranians over the consortium plan. The talks were held in Tehran. Did you go to Tehran any time for this in '54, '55? Did you return to the country for any meetings or discussions?*

STUTESMAN: I did go. As desk officer, I went back to Iran on at least one occasion, and I couldn't tell you the year, but it had nothing to do specifically with negotiations. It was simply going back and working on the ground with people about a myriad of problems. William Rountree was DCM then, I remember that. Henderson, of course, was ambassador.

*Q: So Henderson and Hoover did go to Tehran to meet with the Iranians and discuss the consortium question. Ali Amini was the head of the Iranian negotiating team. Had you met Amini in Tehran?*

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STUTESMAN: He was another member of the Qajar aristocracy which had survived the Shah, had an abiding hatred of the Shah in terms of family relationships. But he was a very, very good representative of his country and very knowledgeable.

*Q: He became ambassador shortly after the consortium question was settled. Was this while you were still at the country desk?*

STUTESMAN: I don't know. Now that you mention it, I do remember that Amini was eased out of the country, given an embassy, the way we occasionally do with people the President doesn't want around, given an embassy to honor him and to move him the hell out of the country so that he wouldn't be there in the carrying out of the settlement. I don't remember why. I don't remember if they were concerned he would be an impediment.

*Q: In any case, I think the Iranians, from the Shah at the highest level down, did not like the consortium arrangement because it still left control of oil in the hands of foreign countries.*

STUTESMAN: Oh, sure.

*Q: How difficult was it to convince the Shah and Amini, as well, to accept the consortium arrangement?*

STUTESMAN: I don't think it was that difficult. They struggled, but the actual progress of the negotiations was, of course, difficult, but I don't think the Iranians thought they could do any more than get the best they could. I don't really think that the Shah or Amini or anybody else thought that they could get anything resembling a non-foreign control. They did, however—and you have to tell me if I'm correct—get in that agreement some kind of understanding that it was a contract with a term.

*Q: I think you're right.*

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STUTESMAN: And after all, what's a couple of years, ten years, whatever it is. I've forgotten. Whereas the negotiation of the AIOC agreement of—what was it, 33 or something, was going to hold them for another 50 years or something. (Laughs) So I think the Iranians were going for a settlement. They knew they had to get a settlement. Two, they were going for as much money as they could get; and three, they were going for a term. And they got it.

*Q: They could change the rules later on.*

STUTESMAN: But I mean, weren't the American companies literally going to be moved out after a period of time?

*Q: I'm not sure. It was sort of an open question, I think.*

STUTESMAN: In any case, it was an open question. At a minimum, it was not conclusive. Anyhow, that's my reaction looking back. I could be mistaken.

*Q: Shortly after the talks ended, the U.S. gave the Iranian Government another grant in aid, some time in the fall of '54, the summer of '54, perhaps. I'm not sure. To what extent did the U.S. link acquiescence to the consortium plan with additional assistance?*

STUTESMAN: I have no idea. I don't know.

*Q: One of the last issues to be settled was a question of which U.S. companies would play a part in the consortium. The smaller companies, independents, originally wanted, I guess, a 33% share in the consortium on the grounds that they had supported the boycott of Iranian oil for the most part, and they should be rewarded for their observation of the international boycott against Mossadegh's oil. How much support did the independents have in the State Department? Was there much sympathy for their position at State?*

STUTESMAN: I don't remember. I just don't remember.

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*Q: Apparently, Ralph K. Davies played a major role in getting the independents some share of the consortium.*

STUTESMAN: Did he, really?

*Q: It was a minor share, but they got a share, like 4% or 5%, something like that.*

STUTESMAN: Was Alton Jones around there? Why am I so familiar with that name? Was he involved with this? He was an independent, certainly.

*Q: I think he might have had a share of the share. I'm not sure. Did you know Davies or have contact with him?*

STUTESMAN: No.

*Q: You just know the name.*

STUTESMAN: I know the name.

*Q: After the consortium agreement was reached late in '54, the Shah came to the United States for a state visit, to meet with Eisenhower and Dulles, among others. What was your role in the preparation for a state visit? What kind of role did the country desk play?*

STUTESMAN: I'll answer it by telling you a story about when the Shah came, not incognito, but not on a state visit. He and his new wife, the German girl, the Bakhtiari girl, I can't think of her name, a beautiful woman, they came and they had a good time up in New York (Laughs). He walked into one of those big car sales places up near Columbus Circle. He's not a very impressive-looking man in civilian clothes, and he had a rather shabby-looking aide with him. The salesman didn't even come over for a while. Some salesman came over, and the Shah, by this time, had looked around the showroom enough, and he said, "I'd like that, but in a sort of orange color, and I'd like two

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of those.” (Laughs) And then he got arrested, speeding on the New Jersey turnpike, and we had to fix that up.

Then he came to Washington, and there were no particular plans. Of course, I was involved with meeting him. He said, “I’d like to ride.” So he and I rented some horses at Rock Creek Park, and went riding in Rock Creek. Christ, when I think about it today, the Shah of Iran and the terrorists and all this stuff, here the two of us were, just riding along in Rock Creek Park, chatting away.

I took him dancing. My wife and the Shah and Soroya, that was her name, we went dancing in one of the big old hotels there. All I did was call up and got a table. I didn’t tell the maitre d’ who was going to be there. Soroya dances very well, I’ll tell you that. It was all very cheerful. Kim Roosevelt got very upset, because he felt that we ought to be doing more. So he got Herbert Hoover, Jr., to have a little soiree. When I think about it, it’s all so pastoral, so halcyon.

*Q: A level of informality that wouldn't have existed 20 years later.*

STUTESMAN: Oh, my God. As to the state visit, the formal visit, when you have a formal visit, the desk is involved in writing toasts and, of course, position papers, but the actual ceremonial stuff is handled by the protocol office and all of that. Frankly, I don’t even remember it. I doubt very much if I was much involved. As I say, when he was there informally, he and I rode together and danced, you know. When he was there formally, he was the Shah of Iran, and I doubt if the desk officer even got invited, except to a large throng or something like that. (Laughs)

*Q: Did you do much work on the military aid program?*

STUTESMAN: No.

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*Q: After the coup in '53, the CIA worked closely with Iranian military. I guess the Tudeh Party had a fairly large presence in the Iranian Air Force and the Army. They had their own people working covertly in the armed forces of Iran. The CIA worked with military intelligence in Iran to purge these people out of positions. Did you know much about this effort?*

STUTESMAN: No. I remember once getting a phone call from, I suppose, the Air Force. I'm not sure, from one of the armed services, either Air or Army, saying about a couple of young officers on training in the United States that information had turned up about them, and the government of Iran wanted them returned promptly. This Defense Department person said they felt they had to have State Department clearance. I said, "Ship 'em back," and hung up.

Years later, somebody in the State Department came to me and said, "We always remember how clear and firm you were on that." I had forgotten all about it. "And how that sort of thing today would be bucked all the way up to the President of the United States and the ACLU would get involved in it."

I said, "I don't know. I thought it was a clear question and I answered it, and that was the end of that."

But nobody said to me, "Prove that they're Tudeh," or anything like that. Maybe they were. Maybe they were just stealing money, for all I know. Anyhow, that's about all I know. That's a long answer to your question.

*Q: You said earlier that at this stage the SAVAK had not been created. They weren't created until '57, I think.*

STUTESMAN: It was not a police state when I was involved.

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*Q: But do you know if there was any liaison between the CIA and the Iranian military intelligence or connection being formed that would have led to SAVAK being created later in the fifties?*

STUTESMAN: I really don't. The first mission we had there was to the gendarmerie, which you can argue is a police force, because it was concerned with internal controls, and we sent General Schwarzkopf there. Then they squeezed him out, and the gendarmerie was still going when I was there, but that closed down. I'm quite sure they were more in the role of highway policemen than they were secret police. Perhaps it was tied into intelligence in the long run, but it was simply not a police state when I was involved with Iran.

*Q: I understand that some of the nationalist politicians, like Fatemi, were executed months after the coup. There was some repression.*

STUTESMAN: Fatemi—that's not repression exactly, is it? I mean, Fatemi called for the death of the Shah, and I think when the Shah came back to power, he killed him. And Mossadegh was tucked away in his farm and kept under police control. I don't think of that as being in the category of a police state controlling its population by police forces. I think the Shah killed, as far as I remember, only one man. He only killed Fatemi, didn't he? Did he kill others?

*Q: There might have been some executions among the Tudeh officers that I mentioned earlier, but beyond that, I'm not sure.*

STUTESMAN: But in terms of National Front, he certainly didn't molest Saleh or Kashani. In fact, some of them remained in the Majlis, didn't they?

*Q: I'm not sure. In negotiations with the Soviet Union during '53 and '54, Zahedi and the Shah moved away from Mossadegh's policy of neutrality, in terms of the Cold War. In negotiations with the Soviet Union, they were accused of making concessions over issues such as the territorial frontiers and World War II debts. In part of the NSC paper that I've*

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*seen, Iran had taken a "provocative" approach towards the Soviet Union, in terms of taking a much more hard line on these questions of borders and war debts and so forth. To what extent did the State Department encourage Zahedi to take a tougher position in these negotiations? Was there any encouragement at all?*

STUTESMAN: I don't remember, but I can say that Loy Henderson, whose memoirs, you know, have recently been published, but they only deal with his experience in Russia, Loy Henderson was a very clear-eyed man when it came to the Soviet Union.(END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO; BEGINNING OF TAPE THREE, SIDE A)

*Q: You were speaking of Loy Henderson and the Soviet Union.*

STUTESMAN: Loy was very clear-eyed in regard to the Soviet Union, and would never miss an opportunity seriously to encourage people to be cautious about the Soviet Union and stand up for what they considered to be their rights.

*Q: I should have asked you about General Zahedi earlier. Had you known him or met him in Tehran before he left?*

STUTESMAN: I knew his son, Ardeshir, who was then one of these young men being given work in our aid programs, and he was a cheerful fellow, not much different in age from me, a little younger, I guess, educated, of course, in the United States. I knew the father socially, but that's about all.

*Q: In the mid-1950s, the Eisenhower Administration had a strong interest in developing a regional military alliance system among the so-called northern tier countries, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, and so forth. That interest led Eisenhower and Dulles to support the Baghdad Pact which came to fruition in the fall of '55. How much interest did the policy makers have in Iran to join such a pact?*

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STUTESMAN: Mr. Dulles is, to me, a perfect example of why you should never have a lawyer as Secretary of State. He was actually stuck on the question of alliances. A man of his experience and knowledge should have realized that getting a foreign state to sign a contract was very different from getting another merchant to sign a contract to sell you goods. But somehow, it became terribly important to him to have these alliances and pacts. My own personal attitude then, and still is, is that it was not a very useful exercise, and that the people being cajoled went along primarily because they thought, "Well, I can turn this into some profit, getting more arms or something." But the Iranians and the Turks had no particular desire to be in alliance, and the thing, as we know, fell apart. The same thing out in Southeast Asia.

Also, of course, this terrible effect that the reconstruction of Europe had on us, which I hope has passed, but the idea that we were responsible for the return of Europe to prosperity, of course, has perverted so much of American doctrine. We weren't. We provided the defense of Europe and we provided some seed capital, but it was the Europeans who created the miracle; it wasn't the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan was an essential element, and you see these poor saps in the Kennedy Administration going down in South America, going to Bolivia, where I was assigned, and deciding that if you just put enough money in and aid programs, that the Bolivians would become a new Puerto Rico. Well, they didn't. And the same thing—I'm digressing a lot—what happened with Dulles and his alliances was, I think, just a lot of hot air and a good deal of expense to us, but it satisfied some inner need of Foster Dulles.

*Q: My impression is that as the Baghdad Pact planning was proceeding in Washington and the Near East, that the Shah announced his decision to join the pact before Dulles was quite ready for Iranian membership.*

STUTESMAN: (Laughs) That's wonderful!

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*Q: Did you get a sense that Dulles wanted the Shah to move a little slowly on joining a pact?*

STUTESMAN: I don't have the slightest memory of that.

*Q: Again I've read that he was concerned that they joined the pact too quickly, that the Soviets would see this as provocation.*

STUTESMAN: I see.

*Q: In terms of a country on their border joining an unfriendly alliance. Again, this might have been as you were leaving the Iran desk.*

STUTESMAN: I just don't remember. I remember being essentially scornful of these pacts, but that's all, for the reason I gave.

*Q: Some of the NSC papers that have been declassified from this period make the point that internal social and political reform was a condition for long-term stability in Iran. What kind of reforms did the U.S. have in mind? Do you recall discussions of the need for reform in Iran as a basis for stability?*

STUTESMAN: I don't. Partially this is because I didn't then and still don't think that reform is an essential element of our involvement with a foreign country, because so frequently our idea of reform is casting them in our image, which is a terrible way to treat other people. So I don't really remember that.

Again I come back to my point of employing fine young men and women in Iran at a time when they would not otherwise have had this kind of employment, and directing them toward idealistic goals. But certainly I don't remember any instructions to Henderson to go down and tell him to let women vote or take the chadors off or anything like that. I don't remember anything like that.

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*Q: It might be more like administrative reforms, budgetary policy changes and things like that.*

STUTESMAN: Oh, sure. Anti-corruption. Sure, I can see that. I remember more discussions like, well, should we build railroads which run from India towards Iraq, or railroads which run from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian, that kind of thing I remember being involved in. Those are long-term considerations. I don't remember the discussion of whether or not to send the village boys to school or not.

*Q: In early '54, a new majlis was elected, and apparently the vote was manipulated in some way. The outcome was there was a Parliament that was controlled generally by landlords and old aristocrats, the more conservative supporters of the Shah. Was there much concern about the political election of the Parliament, that a very conservative Parliament might cause problems in the long term?*

STUTESMAN: I imagine there was. I don't remember. Roy Melbourne, of course, would be a terrific source on that sort of thing. He's down in North Carolina now.

*Q: That's right.*

STUTESMAN: He was chief of the political section, and he's written about it. He's a very scholarly man and probably has kept some notes.

*Q: During the year or two after the fall of Mossadegh, when you were still at the country desk, how strong was the Shah's position in Iran? To what extent was he ruling as opposed to merely reigning?*

STUTESMAN: My first statement is that he was unchallenged, and my second statement is that he was growing in self-confidence. And a leader who lacks self-confidence ain't much of a leader, so he was developing his self-esteem and his self-confidence, and he was beginning to take actions that he could carry through. I don't want to put down the

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British ability to control. They certainly proved their ability to do that. Nonetheless, I think the British treated the Shah, when he was a youngster—after all, they put him on the throne—they treated him almost in schoolmasterish ways, and he couldn't do things that he should have been able to do. The British would say, “Oh, you shouldn't do that.” And we had a certain schoolmasterish attitude, too, I think. But by the time I left the desk, the Shah was in command, and whether he was making mistakes or not, I don't know, but he was in command and he certainly built on that.

*Q: For example, in April of '55, he fired Zahedi as prime minister and put his own more compliant person in. He put Hussein Ala.*

STUTESMAN: Sweet old boy. That goes to my point, at least. That proves it.

*Q: Yes. At the time you left the Iran desk in the summer of '55, according to the chronology I've seen, what was your outlook on the political situation in the country?*

STUTESMAN: I wouldn't say I felt relaxed, but I don't remember that there was any threat to the Shah nor threat to our negotiated oil settlement, and certainly no Russian threat, no external threat. I must say I had the feeling that I was leaving the country when it was getting less and less interesting. (Laughs) I'd been there in the real excitement, and we'd come to a conclusion which I thought was beneficial to both Iran and to the United States.

*Q: You mentioned that at the Iran desk, you went to the secretariat at the State Department. Did you do any work that related to Iran in the following years?*

STUTESMAN: No. In the secretariat, you just focus on the Secretary.

*Q: But in terms of subsequent assignments?*

STUTESMAN: No. While I was in the secretariat, after four years, you generally go abroad again, and I went to see a man that I'd known in China, a senior man who was Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, [Livingston] Livy Merchant. I called and went down to see

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him. I said, "Livy, I did China and I did Iran and the desk, been promoted, and I've got a wife and two children. I've done well, I've served my country well in these tough places. Now do you think there's any chance—I speak bilingual French—do you think there's any possibility of being assigned to a post where they speak French, perhaps in Western Europe?"

And he said, "John, I'll look into it." So I was assigned to Paris and I was there two years, and then Loy Henderson called me back to Washington to work as special assistant, but not on Iranian affairs. So I never had any further involvement with Iranian affairs, nor with the Middle East, for that matter, somewhat to my disappointment, but I never did.

*Q: Any comments you want to make on what happened in Iran in the following 25 years in terms of the consequences of the coup of '53 and its implications for U.S.-Iran relations?*

STUTESMAN: The only thing that comes to my mind is that I became very troubled—I'd already retired—when there were strong arguments in the press and among people in the United States that the Shah was a bad person and was bad for Iran, and that we had, as the United States, made a terrible mistake in supporting him. I realized then that I knew very little about what had happened in Iran since 1955 which led to such an unsavory situation. But I still believe that we did the correct thing, both for Iran and for our own world interests, by helping the young Shah to re-establish his power when Mossadegh fell.

The question of the overthrow of Mossadegh, and in this paper that you gave me, the one you sent me...

*Q: The article David Painter wrote.*

STUTESMAN: He makes clear that there was a progression in the United States Government policies based upon the experience in Iran, and that Guatemala came along soon after and eventually, to our utter horror and dismay, the Kennedys killed Diem. Even though we did the right thing by supporting the Shah, I cannot lose a deep, lingering

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doubt, which I know Loy Henderson had then and always had, that it was unwise for us to intervene clandestinely, and I am confident that it was unwise for us to make that a shining example of how we could handle the world for the rest of time, because obviously you can't. Guatemala worked, and that, again, substantiated the idea that if you had the proper people in, you can fix things up. Of course, it doesn't work that way. So I have those two reactions.

But in terms of the Shah specifically, I think the Shah was a good thing for Iran, certainly while I was there. I think he worked toward good long-term objectives. Obviously he lost that ability toward the end, but he was a good bet, and it did last 20 years.

*Q: Thank you very much for your time.*

End of interview